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Changsin (Chosin) Reservoir, Korea 1950: A Case Study of United States
Army Tactics and Doctrine

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Final report 6 June 1975



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Tactical doctrine was defined as authoritative guidance published by Headquarters, Department of the Army, pertaining to the employment of U.S. Army units in combat.

The study recommends:

1. Doctrine for encircled forces be published in an Army Field Manual applicable to all combat, combat support, and combat service support units.
2. Additional doctrinal guidance be provided concerning the conduct of combat operations and supply economy by forces once encircled and prior to commencing breakout and/or relief operations.
3. Specific doctrinal guidance be provided regarding the evacuation of incapacitated personnel with a breakout force when the probability exists that such evacuation will jeopardize the success of the breakout.
4. Other historical examples of encircled forces and breakout operations be reviewed to confirm the validity of the conclusions reached in this study.

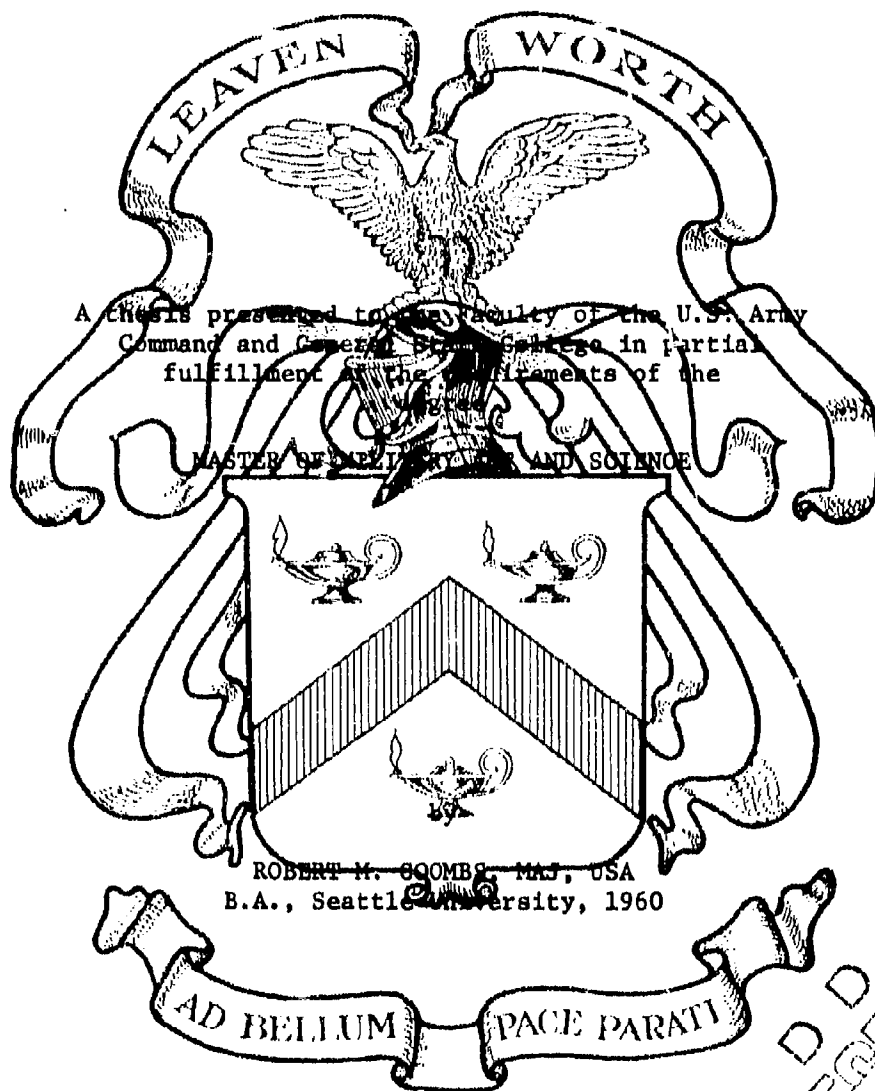
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CHANGJIN (CHOSIN) RESERVOIR, KOREA, 1950:

A CASE STUDY OF UNITED STATES

ARMY TACTICS AND DOCTRINE

FOR ENCIRCLED FORCES



Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1975

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to determine the adequacy of current U.S. Army doctrine relative to encircled units and breakout operations in view of the problems encountered by the 31st Regimental Combat Team, U.S. 7th Infantry Division, on the eastern side of the Changjin [Chosin] Reservoir in North Korea from 26 November to 2 December 1950.

Tactical doctrine was defined as authoritative guidance published by Headquarters, Department of the Army, pertaining to the employment of U.S. Army units in combat.

The historical and descriptive methods of research were used to ascertain the background, training and preparation of the 7th Infantry Division prior to entry into combat in Korea; combat experience of the 7th Infantry Division prior to deployment of the 31st Regimental Combat Team to the Changjin Reservoir; and finally, the period of 26 November to 2 December 1950 during which the 31st Regimental Combat Team was encircled by an estimated two Chinese Communist Divisions and attempted breakout operations which ended in the force ceasing to exist as a military unit.

Analysis of the action determined that the combat action of the 31st Regimental Combat Team provided an excellent example of the problems encountered by a unit which became

encircled by the enemy and attempted breakout operations. Also, that the problems encountered by the force are applicable in today's tactical environment.

Current tactical doctrine contained in U.S. Army Field Manuals was found inadequate. The major problems encountered by the 31st Regimental Combat Team of attrition of combat power due to combat losses, increasing reliance on fire support external to the encirclement, and command actions when communications with external forces were lost, are not included in present doctrine. Conservation of resources available within the encirclement and the necessity for junior leaders to readily assume increased responsibility if their seniors become casualties, are other areas requiring emphasis. Commanders and headquarters senior to the encircled force must aggressively anticipate needs, and render all possible assistance to the encircled force.

The doctrine currently contained in Department of the Army Field Manual 7-20, The Infantry Battalions, (1969), pertaining to the conduct of breakout operations was determined to be comprehensive and adequate except as it pertains to evacuation of incapacitated personnel with the breakout force. However, as currently published this doctrine is only applicable to infantry battalions.

The study recommends:

1. Doctrine for encircled forces be published in an Army Field Manual applicable to all combat, combat support,

and combat service support units.

2. Additional doctrinal guidance be provided concerning the conduct of combat operations and supply economy by forces once encircled and prior to commencing breakout and/or relief operations.

3. Specific doctrinal guidance be provided regarding the evacuation of incapacitated personnel with a breakout force when the probability exists that such evacuation will jeopardize the success of the breakout.

4. Other historical examples of encircled forces and breakout operations be reviewed to confirm the validity of the conclusions reached in this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The encirclement offers the greatest possibility for fixing the enemy in position and permits his systematic capture or destruction.¹

A unit is considered encircled when it is surrounded by an enemy force which has cut all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement. In a fluid situation when forces are widely dispersed, commanders must plan for and accept encirclement either alone or with the assistance of a linkup force.²

These two excerpts from current U.S. Army tactical doctrine set the stage for this study. Its purpose was to determine the adequacy of U.S. Army tactical doctrine relative to encircled units and breakout operations in view of the problems encountered by the 31st Regimental Combat Team, U.S. 7th Infantry Division, at the Changjin Reservoir in North Korea from 26 November to 2 December 1950.³

To permit a mutual understanding of terminology as used throughout this thesis, tactical doctrine was defined

¹Department of the Army, The Infantry Battalions, FM 7-20 (1969), p. 4-23.

²Ibid., p. 7-18.

³The United Nations Forces in Korea best knew the reservoir by its Japanese name, Chosin. This was due to the use of Japanese maps during the operations. Changjin is the Korean name and is used throughout the thesis. Other name clarifications of this nature are also noted.

as authoritative guidance published by the Headquarters, Department of the Army (DA), pertaining to the employment of U.S. Army units in combat. This doctrine was normally published in numbered field manuals.

The historical and descriptive methods of research were used to describe and analyze the action at the Changjin Reservoir and relate it to current tactical doctrine. The more important primary sources consulted included unit diaries, after action reports, intelligence summaries, statements of participants, and current U.S. Army tactical doctrine publications. U.S. Army historical doctrine publications were consulted to assist in understanding tactical applications during the operation. Secondary sources were used to obtain background information and to provide guidance to primary sources and individual participants. A personal interview was conducted with MG John H. Chiles, U.S. Army (Ret.), Liberty, Missouri. A taped memorandum of the interview is in this writer's possession. Correspondence interviews were conducted with LTG Edward M. Almond, U.S. Army (Ret.), Anniston, Alabama; COL Robert E. Jones, U.S. Army (Ret.), Sun City, Arizona; COL William R. Reilly, U.S. Army (Ret.), Austin, Texas; and Mr. Lloyd Pitman, Preble, New York. Copies of this correspondence are in this writer's possession.

Other attempts to obtain current addresses and contact principle officers who participated in the combat action

were unsuccessful. MG David G. Barr, who commanded the 7th Infantry Division; BG Henry I. Hodes, Assistant Division Commander; and LTC Berry K. Anderson, Operations Officer (S3) of the 31st Infantry Regiment; are deceased. No former member of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion could be located.

This thesis is organized in the following manner. Chapter II provides the background leading up to the action at the Changjin Reservoir. Chapter III describes the encirclement and attempted breakout in detail, emphasizing the tactical employment and problems at regimental combat team and battalion levels. Foldout maps at the end of the thesis allow the reader to follow the action as it is recounted. The action is analyzed in terms of current tactical doctrine in Chapter V. Among appendices referenced in the narrative are organization charts of the U.S. Army X Corps (A) and the 31st Regimental Combat Team Task Force (B). A chronology of principal events of the action is in Appendix D.

Three hypotheses were conceived. First, the 31st Regimental Combat Team's action at the Changjin Reservoir provides an excellent historical example of the problems encountered by a unit which is encircled by the enemy and attempts breakout operations. Second, the basic problems encountered by this combat team are applicable in today's tactical environment. Third, that in light of the tactical problems encountered by the combat team, additional U.S.

Army doctrinal guidance is required relating to the tactical operations of forces encircled by the enemy.

An important aspect of the study of tactics by the student is analysis and interpretation of the application of tactical doctrine and principles in historical examples. By their nature tactics and the problems associated with their application on the battlefield cannot be thoroughly appreciated in the sterile environment of the textbook, classroom or field training exercise. By thorough analysis of historical lessons and examples, current tactical doctrine can be upgraded and revised to permit training of combat leaders and units in as realistic a manner as possible prior to entry into actual combat.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

JAPAN-INCHON

At the start of the Korean War on 24 June 1950, the 7th Infantry Division was one of four U.S. Divisions stationed on occupation duty in Japan.¹ The 7th Division, located in Northern Honshu and Hokaido Islands, had an authorized strength of 12,500 personnel as opposed to a wartime authorization of 18,900. Each infantry regiment was authorized only two of its three battalions and each artillery battalion had only two of three firing batteries. After the outbreak of the war the division was further drained of personnel by providing fillers to the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions, and the 1st Cavalry Division, as they deployed to Korea. Many officers and senior enlisted personnel, as well as technicians and specialists were levied

¹Robert E. Jones [COL U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 15 January 1975; and, James F. Schnabel, Policy and Direction: The First Year, Vol. III of United States Army in the Korean War (Washington: United States Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1972), p. 54, citing Far East Command Paper 10, and, Monograph, 1st Lt. Charles G. Cleaver, "Personnel Problems," in History of the Korean War, Vol. III, Pt. 2, Military History Section, Headquarters, Far East Command, (15 August 1952), p. 1.

to fill these divisions.² On 26 July 1950 the 7th Division was relieved of occupation duties and directed to prepare for movement to Korea. The division was reported understrength by 9,117 personnel.³

After being alerted for the combat zone, the division moved south to Camp McNair near Mount Fujiyama. This area was vacated by the 1st Cavalry Division upon its deployment to Korea. The 7th Division began the process of requisitioning equipment and bringing itself up to wartime strength. There were insufficient supply levels remaining in Japan to outfit the division as deployment of the first three divisions had depleted theater reserve stocks. Requisitions for such items as mess kits resulted in the issuance of mess trays as substitutes.⁴

A high priority was established by Far East Command for the input of replacement personnel for the division.

²Edward M. Almond [LTG, U.S. Army (Ret.)], "Memorandum: War in Korea, 1950, Reply to Questions by Major Robert M. Coombs, U.S. Student, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas," (20 January 1975), p. 2; and, Jones.

³Roy E. Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950), Vol. I of United States Army in the Korean War (Washington: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), p. 491, citing "Eighth U.S. Army, Korea, War Diary, 31 July [19]50, Memorandum for Chief of Staff, [Subject:] Strategic Status of 7th Infantry Division."

⁴Jones; and, John G. Westover [ed.], The United States Army in the Korean Conflict: Combat Support in Korea (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1955), pp. 230-31, quoting LTC Kenneth O. Schellberg, "Preparation for Action" (LTC Schellberg was the Quartermaster Officer of the 7th Infantry Division in 1950).

Cadres were provided to flesh out the inactive combat battalions including the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment. The 3d Battalion, 32d Infantry from Fort Benning, Georgia joined the 32d Regiment at Camp McNair, Japan during August 1950. By 7 September 1950, the Division was only 1,349 U.S. personnel short of its full wartime strength.⁵ The quality of the infantry crew served weapons and artillery personnel received from the United States was high. Many of the officers lacked combat experience. Noncommissioned officer strength was poor in the combat units. In Company C, 32d Infantry Regiment, one of the platoon sergeant positions was held by a Private First Class during the Inchon invasion. Only one officer and three senior noncommissioned officers had previous combat experience.⁶ However officers and men were well qualified on weapons and communications equipment.

While the division was in northern Japan, training included both summer and winter field exercises. The value

⁵ Appleman, p. 492, citing James F. Schnabel, "Far East Command, General Headquarters, Support and Participation in the Korean War, Chap. V, pp. 31-32; Jones; Lloyd Pitman [Former member of the 31st Infantry Regiment], personal correspondence to this writer, 10 February 1975; Schnabel, p. 90, citing "Study of Additional Units to Meet Immediate Requirements of Far East Command, Annex B"; and Schnabel, p. 167, citing "Memorandum, G1 General Headquarters for Chief of Staff GHQ, 8 September 1950, subject: Status of 7th Infantry Division Personnel, in CofS GHQ, United Nations Command files."

⁶ Appleman, p. 492, citing interview with [MG David G.] Barr; and, Jones.

of this training was downgraded due to the rapid turnover of personnel and the provision of filler personnel to the other deploying divisions. Once the division moved to southern Japan, it conducted extensive field training.⁷

During the period 1-15 August 1950, the 7th Division received 8,637 South Korean civilians replacements. These men, known as Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army (KATUSA), had been impressed in South Korea. Only a small minority had any previous military training which was obtained in North Korea and Manchuria prior to their escape south and subsequent induction into the South Korean Army. Upon arrival in Japan many KATUSAs were sick, undernourished or confused. Their first week in Japan was spent in quarantine. The KATUSAs were integrated into the U.S. Army units down to squad level with about one hundred Koreans assigned to each company sized unit. The "buddy system" was used to assist in orienting them to the unit. Since only about three interpreters were assigned to each company, much of the training and combat communication was accomplished through the use of sign language. The KATUSAs received the same rations and equipment as U.S. Army personnel.

⁷Almond, p. 2; Jones; and William R. Reilly [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 14 March 1975.

Due to the imminence of the Inchon invasion, only three weeks were available for the accomplishment of any training prior to combat. In spite of this the KATUSAs in artillery and service units worked out remarkably well. In the maneuver units, with few exceptions, such was not the case. During a visit to the 32d Regiment at the front lines on 25 September, MG Edward M. Almond (X Corps Commander) asked an infantry platoon sergeant, "How are your Korean fillers fighting?" He replied, "Not worth a damn, sir." This comment was typical of the evaluation of the KATUSAs assigned to the infantry units in the 7th Division.⁸

On 11 September 1950, the 7th Infantry Division embarked at Yokohama, Japan for the invasion at Inchon, South Korea, part of the X Corps consisting of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Division. Seventh Division strength at embarkation was 24,845 personnel.⁹

⁸ Almond, p. 2; The Artillery School, Department of Training Publications and Aids, "Debriefing Report Number 17," (Fort Sill, Okla., 21 September 1951), p. 13, quoting MAJ Walter W. Sears, former Service Company Commander and 1st Battalion Executive Officer, 31st Infantry Regiment; Jones; Reilly; and Westover, pp. 184-186, quoting LTC Charles R. Scherer, "Supply Lessons" (LTC Scherer was Assistant G4 of the 7th Infantry Division in 1950); See also David C. Skaggs, "The KATUSA Experiment: The Integration of Korean Nationals Into the U.S. Army, 1950-1965," Military Affairs, XXXVIII, No. 2 (April 1974), pp. 53-58.

⁹ Appleman, p. 492; and X Corps, "War Diary: X Corps Summary for Operation Chromite, 15 August to 30 September 1950(U)," (n.d.), p. 8, hereafter referred to as X Corps, "Chromite."

On 15 September 1950, X Corps conducted an amphibious envelopment of the enemy at Inchon (Map A, p. 89). In conjunction with the landing, the 8th Army attacked north from the Pusan perimeter.¹⁰ The 31st and 32d Regimental Combat Teams of the 7th Division participated in the action, assisting in the capture of Seoul and Suwon. While some units were subjected to heavy combat at times, the overall nature of engagements in which the 7th Division participated were described as light to moderate. Morale was high throughout the period.¹¹ On 26 September linkup with the 8th Army was accomplished by the 31st Regimental Combat Team at Suwon.¹² From 5 to 11 October 1950, the 7th Division was relieved of its combat missions and moved overland to the port of Pusan.¹³

NORTHEAST KOREA

During October, the 8th Army continued its attack north from the Inchon/Seoul area. I Corps of the Republic

¹⁰X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," (n.d.), p. 2, hereafter referred to as X Corps, "Chosin."

¹¹Almond, p. 2; John H. Chiles [LTG, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal interview, 15 October 1974; Riley; and, X Corps, "Chromite," p. 8.

¹²X Corps, "Chromite," p. 8.

¹³X Corps, "War Diary: X Corps Monthly Summary, 1-31 October 1950, Wonsan-Iwon Landings," (n.d.), p. 5, hereafter referred to as X Corps, "W.D., 1-31 October 1950."

of Korea Army (ROK) executed a rapid advance along the eastern coast of Korea. X Corps (MG Edward M. Almond, Commanding) planned a second amphibious envelopment, this time against the Wonsan/Hungnam area on the Northeast Coast. The capture of Wonsan on 10 October by I ROK Corps (LTG Kim Pak II, Commanding) obviated the requirement for an assault.¹⁴

The 7th Infantry Division (MG David G. Barr, Commanding) sailed from Pusan on 20 October. On the same day, X Corps established a forward command post in Wonsan, assumed operational control of I ROK Corps and responsibility for all of northeast Korea. The Corps was assigned the mission of attacking to the Manchurian border with the watershed of the Taebuck Mountains as its western boundary.

The 1st Marine Division (MG Oliver P. Smith, Commanding) landed at Wonsan on 26 October followed by the debarkation of the 7th Infantry Division at Iwon commencing on 29 October (Map B, p. 90).¹⁵ (The mission of the 7th Division was established by X Corps Operations Instruction Number 13, 261000 October 1950. It was directed to move over the beaches in the Hongwon/Iwon area; initially land one

¹⁴X Corps, "Chosin," p. 2.

¹⁵Edward M. Almond [LTG, U.S. Army (Ret.)], "Reflections on the Hungnam Evacuation, Korea, December 1950," 1 August 1973, p. 2, hereafter referred to as Almond, "Reflections"; and, X Corps, "W.D., 1-31 October 1950," pp. 4-5.

Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in the vicinity of Iwon; and, to advance rapidly in zone to the Korean northern border relieving elements of I ROK Corps in place.)¹⁶ On 30 October this was modified by Operations Instruction Number 15 which directed the division to continue present missions expediting to the maximum extent practicable, completion of the landing of all elements.¹⁷

On 20 October the strength of the 7th Division was 26,641 including 18,837 United States personnel and 7,804 KATUSAs.¹⁸ Upon completion of the 7th Division landings I ROK Corps was to continue its advance along the northeast coast. The two U.S. divisions were assigned zones to the left of I ROK Corps with the 7th Division in the center and the 1st Marine Division protecting the X Corps western flank.¹⁹

The first contact with Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) in the X Corps area was made by the 26th ROK Regiment on 28 October. This initial contact was with the 42d CCF Army consisting of the 124th, 125th and 126th CCF Divisions.

¹⁶ X Corps, W.D., 1-31 October 1950," p. 50.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁸ Appleman, p. 685, citing X Corps Periodic Operations Report #24, 20 October 1950.

¹⁹ X Corps, "War Diary: X Corps Monthly Summary, 1-30 November 1950, Drive to the Yalu, C[hinese] C[ommunist] F[orces] Counterattack," (n.d.), p. 4, hereafter referred to as X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950."

During the period 14-20 October, the 42d CCF Army crossed the Yalu River and moved southeast on the axis Kanggye-Changjin-Hagaru as the left flank unit of the CCF 13th Army Group. The 26th ROK Regiment was relieved by the 7th U.S. Marine Regiment. The 7th Regiment defeated the 124th and 126th Divisions north of Hamhung while advancing to Hagaru at the southern tip of the Changjin Reservoir. The regiment made no contact with the 125th CCF Division. By 14 November the 124th and 126th CCF divisions had disengaged. Subsequently the 42d CCF Army moved south.²⁰

On 6 November, the 65th Infantry Regiment, 3d U.S. Infantry Division, landed at Wonsan with the entire division completing debarkation on 21 November. This released the bulk of the 1st Marine Division from security operations in the Wonsan-Hamhung area allowing them to maneuver northward toward the Yalu River.²¹

X Corps issued Operation Order Number 6 on 11 November which assigned the following missions:

1st U.S. Marine Division: Advance, destroying the enemy in zone; Prepare for offensive operations to the west on Hamhung-Sachang-ni axis on order; . . . 3d U.S. Infantry Division: Relieve elements of the 1st Marine

²⁰Ibid., pp. 4 and 24. The town of Changjin is currently depicted at the southern end of the Changjin Reservoir by the Army Map Service. The Changjin Town referred to in the historic reports was located north of the Changjin Reservoir as shown on Maps B and D.

²¹X Corps, "Chosin," p. 2.

Division in zone by 12 November; Secure the Wonsan area; Destroy enemy in zone; Establish battalion blocking positions and protect X Corps left (West) flank in zone; Prepare for offensive operations to the West [of Wonsan]; . . . 7th Division: Advance destroying enemy in zone; Prepare to move one RCT to an assembly area West of Hamhung as Corps reserve on order.²²

The following excerpt from the X Corps War Diary appears to amplify the rationale behind operations during November:

Military operations in Northern Korea in the fall and winter of 1950 cannot be fully evaluated without reference to certain salient political conditions that existed at that time. From a political standpoint the decision to go to the Yalu River on a broad front had a distinct advantage. 1. It was the most rapid and effective means of carrying out the 1947 resolution for a unified Korea. 2. By quickly gaining control of all North Korean territory the Chinese Communists' excuse for coming to the aid of the North Korean Peoples Government would be removed in that the NKPG would be a government without a country. 3. It would force the Chinese Communist Government to cross an international boundary openly against UN Forces instead of being able to claim that volunteers were aiding the North Korean cause. 4. The fact of a united well organized Korea solidly behind the UN could be expected to deter the Chinese Communist Government from unshielded intervention. 5. And finally, it was generally considered throughout the capitals of the world in October and November 1950, that Communist China was not prepared to go to war with the UN.²³

The enemy situation, as it was known, assessed the relative combat power as 120,000 United Nations troops opposing 100,000 enemy. The United Nations forces had the

²²X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 51.

²³Almond, "Reflections," p. 3; and, X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 4.

advantage of superior artillery and air support while being hampered by enemy guerrilla activity and extended supply lines. Additionally, the enemy was given the capability of reinforcing his effort with 140,000 CCF troops located north of the Yalu River. For these reasons 8th Army adopted a plan to make a general advance to the north on the western side of North Korea. This plan was adopted to meet any course of action selected by the enemy.²⁴

By this time it became evident to Far East Command that the operations of X Corps would become more dependent on the advance of 8th Army. A change in the X Corps mission was necessitated by the enemy buildup in front of 8th Army. This buildup had halted an attempt to reach the Yalu River on the northern border of Korea during the second week in November.²⁵

By personal letter to MG Almond on 10 November, BG Edwin K. Wright, G3, Far East Command, stated that the Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) [General Douglas MacArthur] desired that X Corps assist 8th Army in its advance. MG Almond replied that X Corps could best support 8th Army by continuing to attack north and, if feasible, by attacking to the west, north of the Changjin Reservoir.²⁶ A message

²⁴ Almond, "Reflections," p. 3; and, X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 5.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 5.

from CINCPF, received by X Corps on 16 November, required the development of a plan to attack west upon reaching Changjin (Town) in order to cut the enemy main supply route at Kanggye.²⁷

In response to this message, the Corps staff developed a plan to seize Kanggye by attacking west from Changjin (Town). MG Almond disapproved this plan due to the extended main supply route of the unit making the main effort. He directed that a new plan be developed with the main effort on the Hagaru-Mupyong axis by the 1st Marine Division, that an RCT of the 7th Infantry Division be given the mission of seizing Changjin (Town), and that an assumption be added that the extreme minimum temperatures of -40°F anticipated in the area from December to March would severely restrict combat operations in the X Corps zone. MG Almond approved the revised plan on 21 November and subsequent approval was given by Far East Command on 23 November with a minor shift in boundary between X Corps and 8th Army.²⁸ It was published on 25 November as X Corps Operation Order Number 7. Tasks stated in the order were:

- a. X Corps attacks 2708001 November to sever enemy lines of communication at Mupyong-ni and destroys enemy in zone to the northern boundary of Korea, along the Yalu River on the left to the mouth of the Tumen River.

²⁷Ibid., citing CINCPF message, CX69009.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 5-6.

b. 1st Marine Division: Attack 270800I to seize Mupyong-ni, advance to the Yalu River, and destroy enemy in zone.

c. 7th Infantry Division: (1) Attack north at 270800I from Chosin [Changjin] Reservoir, advance to the Yalu River, and destroy enemy in zone. (2) Secures Pungsan area after coordinating with I ROK Corps.

d. I ROK Corps: Defend Yalu River line in zone, advance from Hapsu and Chongjin areas, destroy enemy in zone to northern boundary of Korea.

e. 3d Infantry Division: (1) Gain and maintain contact with the right flank, 8th Army in zone. (2) Protect X Corps West flank in zone. (3) Support 1st Marine Division on X Corps order. (4) Protect airfield and harbor facilities in Wonsan area, and (5) Destroy enemy guerrilla forces in zone.²⁹

AREA OF OPERATIONS

In order to understand and appreciate the tactical problems encountered by the 31st RCT on the eastern shore of the Changjin Reservoir, a brief description of the general area of operations is necessary. Details pertaining to specific portions of the action are contained in Chapter III.

By present U.S. Army doctrine, the Changjin Reservoir lay within the area of northern operations. Due to environmental conditions such an area required the application of special techniques and equipment not normally necessary for operations in a more temperate area.³⁰

²⁹Ibid., pp. 6-7.

³⁰Department of the Army, Northern Operations, FM 31-71, (1971), p. 1-1.

Mean temperatures at Changjin (Town) for the month of November were a low of +7 and a high of +36°F. December's mean temperatures were a low of -13 and a high of +19°F. The minimum recorded temperatures were -29° on 30 November and -46° on 29 December. The earliest recorded date of first freeze was September 12th. The mean precipitation was only 1.0 inches in November and 0.7 inches in December. This data was gathered prior to 1951.³¹

The reservoir lay at an elevation of 1070 meters within rugged mountain terrain (Map C, p. 91). Peaks in the area rose to elevations of 1200 to 1800 meters. From Hagaru, at the southern end of the reservoir a dirt road ran along the eastern shore. It was barely wide enough for the passage of trucks. The terrain sloped steeply up from the reservoir and was cut by numerous stream lines forming cross-compartments. The road ran around the larger inlets and crossed the smaller ones on narrow wooden bridges. The one concrete bridge at Sasu-ri (CV541759) had been destroyed but the stream could be forded just below the bridge site. A narrow gauge railroad followed the shore line to the Pungnyuri River, crossing the

³¹Far East Command, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff Theater Intelligence Division, Geographic Branch, "Special Report No. 60: Selected Climatic Data, August-November, Korea," (15 August 1951); and, Far East Command, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff Theater Intelligence Division, Geographic Branch, "Special Report No. 107: Selected Climatic Data, December-February, Korea," (24 December 1951).

small streams on unfloored wooden trestles.³²

Another road led inland to the west from Hagaru through Toktong Pass and north to Yudam (CV4082). There the road branched. One branch led west to Mupyong. The other branch continued north and met the road running along the eastern shore at the northern tip of the Changjin Reservoir.³³

The main supply route to the area was from Hungnam to Hagaru, a distance of 102 kilometers (Map D, p. 92). Leaving Hungnam, the first half of the distance was two lane road passing through relatively level terrain. This changed to rolling country for another 20 kilometers and north of Sangtong began a steep and curving climb to Funchilin Pass. In the next twelve kilometers the road climbed 800 meters along a shelf cut into the cliffs. In this area trucks could pass only at selected locations. A narrow gauge railway also ran through the pass, paralleling the road from Koto to Hagaru. Maintenance of the road from Hamhung to Hagaru

³²C. P. Miller [LTC, U.S. Army], "Chosin Reservoir, Nov-Dec 1950," (October 1953), (Unpublished narrative submitted in fulfillment of a requirement while a student at USACGSC. LTC Miller was the Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment during the action at the Changjin Reservoir. Copy in this writer's possession), p. 3; and, U.S. Army Map Service, "Series L 751, Sheets 6635 I through 6635 IV," (Washington: 1960).

³³U.S. Army Map Service, "Series L751, Sheets 6635 I through 6635 IV".

CHAPTER III

GENERAL

On 24 November 1950, the 7th Infantry Division received a warning order from X Corps directing the assumption of the 1st Marine Division zone east of the Changjin Reservoir on 27 November. The order also attached the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment (1st Bn, 32d Inf) to the 1st Marine Division for operational control.¹ At the time of receipt of the order, the 1st Bn, 32d Inf was moving from positions approximately 48 kilometers northwest of Hamhung to rejoin the 32d Infantry Regiment north of Pukchong (Map D, p. 92).² The battalion commander, LTC Don C. Faith, had preceded the column to contact the regimental commander and obtain the new mission for the battalion.³

¹7th [U.S. Army] Infantry Division, "Command Report (CHSIS-5(R1): Chosin Reservoir 27 November to 12 December 1950." (n.d.), hereafter referred to as 7th Inf Div, "Command Report."

²Martin Blumenson [CPT, U.S. Army], "Chosin Reservoir, 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, 24-30 November 1950," Item #102, 3d Historical Detachment, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea, (1951), (Microfilm copy), quoting interview of 1Lt James G. Campbell, 058339, Platoon Leader, Machine Gun Platoon, Company D, 32d Infantry Regiment, 20 July 1951.

³Robert E. Jones [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 13 February 1975; and C. P. Miller [LTC, U.S. Army], "Chosin Reservoir, Nov-Dec 1950," (October 1953), (Unpublished narrative submitted in fulfillment of a requirement while a student at USACGSC. LTC

Major Crosby P. Miller, the battalion executive officer, was commanding the battalion when a X Corps Liaison officer ordered him to halt the convoy near Hamhung and report to X Corps Headquarters. At X Corps he met with MG Almond and MG Barr. They directed him to move the battalion up the eastern shore of the Changjin Reservoir as far as possible that day and attached the battalion to the 1st Marine Division. The battalion moved north and spent the night of 24-25 November in bivouac at Chinhung Village, after having been stopped at the foot of Funchilin Pass by a Marine traffic control officer. Authority was received to proceed through the pass at first light on the 25th. LTC Faith joined the battalion during the night.⁴

At this time, all three infantry battalions of the 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division were operating on the eastern shore of the Changjin Reservoir. MG Smith kept their advance in check until a supply base was established and built-up at Hagaru. The farthest advance north of the 5th Marines occurred on the 25th of November, when a platoon

Miller was Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment during the action at the Changjin Reservoir. Copy in this writer's possession.), p. 3; LTC Faith had been in command of the battalion in Japan and during the combat at Inchon.

⁴Miller, p. 1; 7th Inf Div, "Command Report,"; and, 7th [U.S. Army] Infantry Division, "Action Report of 7th Infantry Division from 21 November 1950 to 20 December 1950: From Hyesanjin to Hungnam Outloading," (n.d.), p. 1, hereafter referred to as 7th Inf Div, "Action Report."

size patrol of the 3d Battalion, supported by two tanks, moved almost to the northern end of the reservoir. It encountered scattered enemy groups and during the pursuit killed five Chinese soldiers and captured one. They also destroyed an abandoned 75mm gun. This was one of the few enemy contacts in the area in spite of heavy patrolling by Marines from all three battalions of the 5th Regiment. LTC Robert C. Taplett, Commanding Officer of the 3d Battalion, reported no sign of major enemy activity during a helicopter reconnaissance of the area.⁵

On the morning of 25 November the 1st Bn, 32d Inf moved through Funchilin Pass, Koto Village, Hagaru Village and north along the eastern shore of the Changjin Reservoir to where the road makes a hairpin turn north of Hudong Village (Map E, p 93). The temperature was -25°F accompanied by high winds. One or two men from each company suffered frostbite during the move.⁶ At Hudong, the 5th Marine Regiment assigned the battalion positions between its own 1st and 2d Battalions.⁷ The 1st Bn, 32d Inf dispatched patrols to the

⁵L. Montross and N. A. Canzona, The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Vol. III of U.S. Marine Operations in the Korean War, (Washington: United States Marine Corps, G-3 [Division], Historical Branch, 1957), p. 147, citing 5th Marine Special Action Report 15-18, and [MG O. P.] Smith notes, p. 626.

⁶Blumenson, interview of Campell.

⁷32d Regimental Combat Team, "War Diary, 27 November 1950," (27 November 1950), p. 45, quoting SFC Fremont Piercefield, Operations Sergeant, 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, hereafter referred to as 32d RCT, "W.D., 27 November 1950."

north and east.⁸

Within the 32d Infantry Regiment, a Standing Operating Procedure prescribed items of clothing and equipment each man could wear or carry.⁹ Showdown inspections were held regularly and excess equipment collected. The various articles worn on a specific operation were prescribed. Experience established that the combat boot was better than the shoepak for marching, since the shoepak caused the foot to sweat excessively. After the march, or during static situations the shoepak, with two pairs of ski socks and a pair of felt insoles, were substituted for the combat boots. A wet-cold instruction team conducted a training program under division auspices to insure that all troops understood the layer principle of insulation.¹⁰

⁸U.S. Marine Historical Branch, statement on file of CPT Edward P. Stamford U.S.M.C.(NA), (n.d.), (CPT Stamford was the Officer in Charge of the Marine Tactical Air Control Party attached to the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry during the action at the Changjin Reservoir, 2Opp.), p. 1, hereafter referred to as Stamford, statement.

⁹These included: helmet with liner, cotton field cap, wool muffler, two sets of winter underwear, high neck sweater, pile field jacket liner, field jacket with hood, a pair of wool field trousers, four pairs of ski socks, a pair of combat boots fitted over ski socks, a pair of shoepaks with two sets of insoles, poncho, cargo and combat field packs, mountain sleeping bag, cartridge or pistol belt, canteen with cup and cover, first aid packet with pouch, toilet articles, individual weapons and ammunition, and a maximum of three meals of "C" rations.

¹⁰Robert E. Jones [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 15 January 1975; and, John G. Westover [ed.], The United States Army in the Korean Conflict:

On 26 November, the 7th Infantry Division ordered the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT) under the command of COL Allan D. McLean, to move to the eastern side of the Changjin Reservoir. The mission of the RCT was to relieve the 5th Marine Regiment in that vicinity; and, to advance to the Yalu River. Initially the RCT was composed of the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry (3d Bn, 31st Inf); 1st Bn, 32d Inf; 57th Field Artillery Battalion minus Battery C and with Battery D, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion attached; Heavy Mortar Company, 31st Infantry minus one firing platoon; and, elements of Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), and Service Company, 31st Infantry Regiment.¹¹ The Tank Company of the 31st Regiment had previously started movement to the Changjin Reservoir on 24 November, arriving at Pukohong (DV4225) on the 25th. On the 26th it departed for Hamhung by rail, arriving there that afternoon.¹²

Combat Support in Korea, (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1955), pp. 175-176, quoting "Command Action in Korea," prepared for the Army Field Forces Commanders Preventive Maintenance Course, Aberdeen Proving Ground, [Md.], 1952.

¹¹John H. Chiles [LTG, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal interview, 15 October 1974; 7th Inf Div, "Command Report"; and, 31st Infantry Regiment, "Command Report, 1-4 December (INCL[usive])" (10 March 1951), Inclosure 5, CPT George A. Resula, "Summary of Operations in the Chosin Reservoir Area," (n.d.), p. 1, hereafter referred to as 31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula; COL McLean had recently taken command of the 31st Regiment.

¹²7th Inf Div, "Action Report," p. 5.

At 1800 hours on 26 November, the 31st RCT Forward Command Post became operational at the location of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. A rear command post was established at Hudong Village (CV537754) at 2000 hours. The Marines began withdrawal from the eastern side of the reservoir during this period.¹³

COL McLean informed LTC Faith that the units of the 31st RCT would arrive in the area on November 27th and that the 1st Bn, 32d Inf would be attached to the 31st RCT. LTC Faith recommended that his battalion move into positions occupied by the 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, approximately 21 kilometers north of Hagaru. COL McLean approved the move for the morning of 27 November.¹⁴

As of 26 November, the 1st Marine Division Intelligence Officer (G2) did not credit the enemy with having an offensive capability in the Changjin Reservoir area. There had been an almost absolute absence of any indications that would substantiate such a capability. While local civilians had reported an unusually large number of enemy, experience had shown that these reports normally were exaggerated as to numbers while being accurate as to position. There had been no aggressive enemy patrolling. Both air and ground reconnaissance reported no sizeable enemy troop concentrations. Additionally, the enemy had not strongly defended

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴32d RCT, W.D., 27 November 1950, quoting Piercefield.

the key road junction at the village of Yudam (CV4082) indicating a decided weakness in defensive capability. Contributing to the lack of clarity of the enemy situation was the possibility of three separate groups being included in the civilian intelligence reports. The first group was the North Korean Army elements. The second group comprised the remnants of the 42d CCF Army previously in contact with the 1st Marine Division. The last group was the 20th CCF Army, consisting of the 58th, 59th, 60th and 89th Divisions, of which only the 89th Division had been tentatively identified as being in the area. The G2 considered it possible that this Army had sideslipped the 1st Marine Division and had the mission of moving around their left flank, cutting the Marine main supply to the south, and severing the frontline units from their main source of supply.¹⁵ On the night of the 26th the Marines on the east side of the Changjin Reservoir received light probing attacks on their positions.¹⁶

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On 27 November, the 1st Bn, 32d Inf moved north to the positions formerly occupied by the 3d Battalion, 5th Marine

¹⁵X Corps, "War Diary: X Corps Monthly Summary, 1-30 November 1950, Drive to the Yalu, CCF [Chinese Communist Forces] Counterattack," (n.d.), hereafter referred to as X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950, pp. 9, 10 and 24.

¹⁶Blumenson, interview of Campell.

Regiment, closing into the area at 1300 hours (Map E, p. 94). The Marines withdrew from the eastern side of the Changjin Reservoir.¹⁷

The 1st Bn, 32d Inf established defensive positions on high ground in the shape of a large horseshoe. The open end of the horseshoe was tied in to the reservoir. Company A was on the north (left end of the horseshoe) in position to block the road leading to the north. Company C extended east from the Company A right flank and around the northern portion of the bend in the horseshoe. Company B completed the bend and covered the southeastern and southern segments of the position. The Battalion Headquarters, HHC, and Company D, minus the Machine Gun Platoon and 75mm Recoilless Rifle Platoon positioned with the rifle companies, were in a deep ravine to the rear of Companies A and C. An ammunition supply point was also in the ravine. The battalion perimeter was overextended and thinly held but commanded excellent control of the terrain and the key road leading to the north.¹⁸ The U.S. Marine Tactical Air Control Party attached to the battalion occupied a battalion observation post positioned in the Company A sector.¹⁹ The battalion dispatched patrols to the north and east of the position. The troops emplaced booby

¹⁷7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 2.

¹⁸Miller, pp. 3-4.

¹⁹Stamford, statement, p. 2.

traps fabricated from hand grenades in front of individual defensive positions. It was normal for each man to carry two hand grenades and place one booby-trap in front of each two-man position. The area where the road passed through the northern portion of the battalion position was neither mined or booby-trapped. However, it was covered by fire from the positions of Companies A and C.²⁰

At 1600 hours the 3d Bn, 31st Inf and the 57th Artillery Battalion (57th FA Bn) closed into an area approximately four kilometers south of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. The 57th FA Bn (LTC Ray O. Embree, Commanding) consisted of Headquarters Company; Batteries A and B, each equipped with six 105mm howitzers; and elements of the Service Battery. Battery D (less one platoon) of the 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion [Btry D (-), 15th AAA AW Bn] was attached to the 57th FA Bn. Its equipment included four M19, full tracked twin 40mm antiaircraft weapons and, four M16, half-tracked quad 50 caliber antiaircraft machineguns. The Battery (CPT James R. McClymont, Commanding) carried double its normal load of ammunition for these weapons.²¹

²⁰Blumenson, quoting interview of 2Lt James O. Mortrude, 0971102, Platoon Leader, 1st Platoon, Company C, 32d Infantry Regiment, 6 August 1951.

²¹Army Ground Forces, "The New Infantry Division," (December 1946); Robert W. Hain, Jr., "Antiaircraft with the 7th Division," Antiaircraft Journal, (January 1951), p. 19; 7th Inf Div, "Action Report," p. 2; and 31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1; LTC Hain commanded the 15th AAA AW Bn.

The 3d Bn, 31st Inf (LTC William R. Reilly, Commanding) established a defensive perimeter, positioned automatic weapons, dispatched local reconnaissance patrols and established outposts. Organization and coordination of the defense was difficult because it had to be accomplished in the dark without the benefit of prior reconnaissance.²² Positions of the firing batteries of the 57th FA Bn were within the perimeter of the 3d Bn, 31st Inf. The Headquarters, Headquarters Battery and Btry D (-), 15th AAA AW Bn were about 1400 meters south of the perimeter of the 3d Bn 31st Inf.²³

During this period, the Heavy Mortar Company, 31st Regiment (CPT George Cody, Commanding) less one firing platoon attached to the 2d Bn, 31st Inf arrived in the area and occupied firing positions between the 1st Bn, 32d Inf and the 3d Bn, 31st Inf. The platoon from the Heavy Mortar Company of the 32d Infantry Regiment that was attached to the 1st Bn, 32d Inf was further attached to the 31st Heavy Mortar Company.²⁴ This, in effect, created a full company which was authorized eight 4.2 inch mortars.²⁵ The units conducted

²²William R. Reilly [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 14 March 1975; and, 7th Inf Div, "Action Report," p. 3.

²³William R. Reilly [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], telephonic interview, 18 January 1975; and, 7th Inf Div, "Action Report," p. 4.

²⁴Miller, p. 4.

²⁵Army Ground Forces.

registration firing of both the artillery and the mortars.²⁶

The regimental rear command post remained in the vicinity of Hudong. COL McLean directed establishment of a forward command post in the vicinity of the heavy mortar positions about half way between the 1st Bn, 32d Inf and the 3d Bn, 31st Inf.²⁷ At 1800 hours COL McLean departed the rear command post for the forward battalion positions.²⁸ The RCT issued an order for an attack the next morning to seize the key road junction at Kalchon (CV5191). A report stated that four hundred to six hundred enemy were occupying the town.²⁹

At 1900 hours the 31st Tank Company arrived in the Changjin area and went into position in the vicinity of the Regimental Rear Command Post.³⁰ Service Battery of the 57th FA Bn assembled in a small village about 2000 meters south of the Regimental Rear Command Post.³¹

With the exception of elements of the 31st Medical Company which would pass through the Regimental Rear Command Post during the night, the formation of the 31st RCT that would fight on the eastern side of the Changjin Reservoir was complete (Appendix B).

²⁶Miller, p. 4. ²⁷7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

²⁸7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 5.

²⁹Miller, p. 4; and, 7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 3.

³⁰7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 5.

³¹31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1.

Only partial personnel strength figures for the Combat Team have been located. However, a conservative estimate of the total strength of the Army force on the eastern side of the Changjin Reservoir was 3155 (Appendix C).

Meanwhile the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment minus Company E (2d Bn, 31st Inf (-)) was directed to move from Pukchong to the Changjin Reservoir. The battalion arrived in Hamhung on the evening of 27 November. X Corps ordered it to remain there pending further orders. The Corps exercised control over all movements on the main supply route between Hamhung and Hagaru.³²

About 2000 hours the 31st RCT received a message stating that the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments (vicinity Yudam, CV4082) had been attacked by a strong Chinese Communist force. Also, aerial reconnaissance reported two CCF battalions moving toward the positions of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf from the north.³³

For some reason the 3d Bn, 31st Inf received a "Flash Red Alert" (attack by enemy aircraft imminent) at 2200 hours. This caused the battalion to notify its companies, platoons and outposts of the alert; double the guard on the perimeter; and check communications with all elements.³⁴

³²7th Inf Div., "Command Report," and, 7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 9.

³³32d RCT, "W.D., 27 November 1950," p. 45, quoting Piercefield.

³⁴7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 3.

At 2250 hours enemy patrols initiated probing attacks against the perimeter of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. Each rifle company reported receiving several attacks against their positions. As a result of these attacks, COL McLean cancelled the scheduled dawn offensive against Kalchon. He decided to await the arrival of additional units of the 31st Regiment prior to attacking due to the vague enemy situation.³⁵

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The enemy launched a coordinated attack against the 31st RCT at 0030 hours, 28 November (Map G, p. 95). Initially the CCF struck the 1st Bn, 32d Inf from the north against the positions of Companies A and C. Company B continued to receive probing attacks.³⁶ The Chinese gained a penetration in the A Company area to a depth of 200 meters, overrunning the company 60mm mortar positions. The company commander was killed early in the fighting. Communications with the Battalion Headquarters and the 81mm Mortar Platoon of Company D were lost. CPT Edward P. Stamford (the Marine TACP) assumed temporary command of the company. The enemy attack was supported by mortars and, at least, one direct fire weapon believed to be a 76mm self-propelled gun. The heavy

³⁵Ibid., p. 1; and, Miller, p. 4.

³⁶7th Inf Div., "Command Report"; and, Miller, p. 5.

expenditure of ammunition by the company in stopping the enemy attack concerned CPT Stamford. He even ordered a cease fire on one occasion when the Company's firing appeared much too heavy in proportion to the fire being received from the enemy.³⁷ Local counterattacks were successful in restoring the A Company positions.³⁸

The enemy drove elements of Company C from a knoll on the right flank of the company position. Efforts to retake this ground were unsuccessful as the Chinese emplaced several heavy machineguns capable of raking the crest of the knoll.³⁹

Throughout the fight the regimental 4.2 inch mortars delivered continuous support, at times as close as 100 meters in front of friendly positions. Initially the 57th FA Bn delivered some fire support; however, this slackened as the artillery positions came under attack.⁴⁰

At 0100 hours a detachment of the 31st Medical Company passed through the RCT rear command post enroute to the forward battalions. It was ambushed about 2300 meters north of Hudong. Some of the personnel fought their way forward while others returned to the rear command post.⁴¹ No further

³⁷Stamford, statement, pp. 3-4.

³⁸Miller, p. 6.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Robert E. Jones [MAJ, U.S. Army], "Memorandum to Major Lynch, G3 [Operations] Section, 7th Division, APO 7," (4 December 1950), hereafter referred to as Jones "Memorandum."

⁴¹7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 6.

traffic was able to move to the forward battalions due to CCF occupation of positions overlooking the road.⁴²

In the area of the 3d Bn, 31st Inf, firing was heard to the northeast at 0100 hours. Personnel of K Company manning a roadblock located about 2 kilometers from the perimeter reported the firing as being between them and the battalion perimeter. At 0130 a strong attack was launched by the enemy against K Company and portions of I Company. The attackers penetrated and overran the K Company command post. The Chinese continued to press the attack forcing the further withdrawal of K Company to the A Battery, 57th FA Bn positions. A Battery placed direct fire on the advancing CCF until the supply of howitzer ammunition was exhausted. This position was abandoned with both K Company and the personnel of A Battery withdrawing to the B Battery, 57th FA Bn position. This position was colocated with the I Company command post. Here the Chinese advance was stopped. A counterattack succeeded in recapturing the A Battery howitzers and at dawn the enemy withdrew.⁴³ The Air Force Forward Air Controller attached to the 3d Bn, 31st Inf (LT Johnson) was killed, and his communication equipment damaged, during the attack.⁴⁴

⁴²31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1.

⁴³7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 3-4; and, 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

⁴⁴Reilly, personal correspondence, 14 March 1975.

At 0500 hours the position of the Headquarters, 57th FA Bn and Btry D (-), 15th AAA AW Bn received mortar fire. A ground attack followed shortly after daylight but was broken up by rifle fire and direct fire from the M16 and M19 anti-aircraft weapons systems.⁴⁵

Meanwhile fighting continued in the area of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. Close air support aircraft arrived on station over the force shortly after daylight and their support continued throughout the day, delivering the heaviest support in the Company C area.⁴⁶ The battalion marked targets with rifle grenades and in some cases hand thrown white phosphorus grenades. Communications from the forward positions to the aircraft were by assault telephone wire to the TACP at the battalion headquarters and then by radio to the planes. By 1600 hours a counterattack launched at 0900 hours was finally successful in restoring the terrain lost the previous night in the Company C area with the exception of the knoll.⁴⁷ Fighting also continued in the B Company area (the battalion rear) throughout the day.⁴⁸

COL McLean moved the regimental forward command post into the area of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf during the afternoon.

⁴⁵7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 4.

⁴⁶Stamford, statement, p. 6.

⁴⁷Blumenson, interview of Mortrude.

⁴⁸Miller, p. 6.

Observers saw columns of Chinese troops moving south along the ridges to the east of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. COL McLean stated that similar movement was being reported by the 3d Bn, 31st Inf and the 57th FA Bn.⁴⁹ United Nations aircraft engaged a Russian made T-34 tank accompanied by "a couple" of self-propelled guns and an estimated three to four hundred CCF troops on the road north of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. The attack resulted in heavy losses to the Chinese force.⁵⁰

At 1000 hours BG Henry I. Hodes, Assistant Division Commander of the 7th Infantry Division, arrived at the rear command post of the 31st Regiment. He and the staff planned an attack to open the road to the 3d Bn, 31st Inf. The attacking force consisted of the 31st Tank Company and a composite infantry unit consisting of personnel from HHC, 31st Regiment and Company C, 13th Engineer Battalion. BG Hodes accompanied the force in the attack which was stopped by the enemy at the location of the Medical Company ambush on the previous night. Four tanks and approximately 15 infantrymen were lost. They estimated the enemy force to be in battalion strength and armed with 3.5 inch rocket launchers and antitank guns.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁵⁰Stamford, statement, p. 6.

⁵¹7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 6; and, 31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1.

The 3d Bn, 31st Inf reorganized their positions during the day. The battalion combined companies K and L due to losses sustained the previous night. They formed a tighter perimeter requiring withdrawal of troops from the high ground on the east and south sides. The Headquarters of the 57th FA Bn (-) and D Btry (-), 15th AAA AW Bn displaced north into the perimeter of the 3d Bn, 31st Inf. The M16s and M19s of the battery strengthened the defensive positions. The perimeter received sporadic mortar fire throughout the day. Just prior to dark the enemy renewed their attacks. The enemy penetrated the defenses but counterattacks by the battalion reserve were successful in restoring the perimeter.⁵²

The regimental rear command post area reorganized for defense. Service Battery of the 57th FA Bn moved into the area providing additional personnel to assist in the defense. The rear command post relayed requests from the forward battalions for airdrops of artillery and small arms ammunition, and medical supplies to higher headquarters. At 1830 hours BG Hodes sent a radio message to MG Barr stating that the need for an additional battalion to reinforce the RCT was urgent.⁵³

Meanwhile, X Corps ordered Company B, 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment to defend Sangtong (CV5939). The

⁵²7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 4.

⁵³Ibid., p. 6.

company departed Hamhung at 0900 hours. X Corps changed the company's mission to joining the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir while the company was enroute to Sangtong. At 1930 hours B Company arrived in Koto Village. It could not proceed further due to enemy roadblocks between Koto and Hagaru. At Koto, X Corps placed it under the command of the 1st Marine Regiment.⁵⁴

At 1700 hours X Corps ordered the 2d Bn, 31st Inf to proceed by rail at 0500 hours on 29 November and establish blocking positions east of Sangtong. At 2000 hours X Corps changed the order. The battalion would move by rail to Sangtong on 29 November. From there it would continue north in trucks provided by X Corps at 1100 hours. The battalion's mission was to clear the X Corps main supply route and join the 31st RCT east of the Changjin Reservoir.⁵⁵

The 1st Bn, 32d Inf and the 3d Bn, 31st Inf suffered heavy casualties during the preceeding twenty-four hours. Over one hundred casualties had been handled by the aid station of the 2d Bn, 31st Inf.⁵⁶ K Company, 3d Bn, 31st Inf was reported as almost being wiped out.⁵⁷ The Commanding Officers of both the 3d Bn, 31st Inf and the 57th FA Bn had been wounded.⁵⁸ Injuries caused by the cold were also a

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁷31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1.

⁵⁸7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

significant problem, particularly for troops previously wounded or those who had to remain immobile in foxholes for extended periods of time. No warming facilities were available to alleviate the incidence of frostbitten and frozen hands and feet. The cold appeared to decrease the alertness of the troops to a considerable extent. It also effected the proper functioning of weapons. Carbines usually jammed after the first round was fired. The 30 caliber light machineguns would not initially fire automatically and had to be hand operated until the weapon warmed up.⁵⁹

The 1st Marine Division had opened a command post in Hagaru at 1100 hours.⁶⁰ Shortly thereafter MG Almond visited MG Smith in Hagaru.⁶¹ They determined that the overall enemy situation and intent of the CCF effort had not developed sufficiently to warrant a change in unit missions at that time.⁶²

Upon departing Hagaru by helicopter at 1300 hours, MG Almond visited LTC Faith at the command post of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. After reviewing the tactical situation he still did not feel that a change in the mission of the 31st RCT was required. He considered that the 1st Bn, 32d Inf was "in an

⁵⁹Jones, personal correspondence, 15 January 1975; Stamford Statement, p. 5.

⁶⁰Montross, p. 205.

⁶¹X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 16.

⁶²Edward M. Almond [LTG, U.S. Army (Ret.)], "Memorandum: War In Korea, 1950, Reply to Questions by Major Robert M.

awkward tactical position, namely, in the bottom of a large bowl area with the enemy threatening the high ground all around." MG Almond was displeased with the tactical dispositions and ordered LTC Faith to move the battalion either "forward, backward or sidewise to correct its deployment and place his main force on the high ground before nightfall." LTC Faith acknowledged this order and MG Almond departed after decorating LTC Faith and two other men with the Silver Star.⁶³

After leaving the 1st Bn, 32d Inf, MG Almond visited MG Barr at the 7th Infantry Division Headquarters. During the conference he was summoned to a meeting at the Far East Command Headquarters in Tokyo. At this meeting, covering the full situation in the 8th Army and X Corps areas, General McArthur directed that existing missions of X Corps be continued except for the attack northwest from the Changjin Reservoir. He directed that this attack be discontinued.⁶⁴

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At 0030 hours the Chinese resumed their attacks against the 1st Bn, 32d Inf (Map H, p. 96).⁶⁵ Company B reported a penetration on its left flank. A reserve force

Coombs, U.S. Army Student, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, (20 January 1975), p. 4.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 16.

⁶⁵7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 2.

organized from elements of HHC and Company D moved into a blocking position to blunt the penetration. The CCF failed to press their attack and the perimeter was restored. Heavy enemy pressure against Company C caused LTC Faith to order one platoon of Company B to reinforce Company C. With this assistance, Company C managed to hold its positions. The rate of 4.2 inch mortar fire decreased as the mortar positions came under attack. In the Company A area, a heavy CCF attack succeeded in bending back the company's left flank and isolating one platoon. A counterattack to regain contact with the platoon was unsuccessful.⁶⁶

The ammunition supply became critical and COL McLean and LTC Faith discussed withdrawing the battalion to the positions occupied by the 3d Bn, 31st Inf.⁶⁷ At 0330 hours COL McLean made the decision to withdraw.⁶⁸

The planned withdrawal called for the offloading of the equipment on the battalion trucks to allow movement of the wounded personnel. This equipment and some of the vehicles were left behind. They were not destroyed in order to maintain secrecy of the withdrawal.⁶⁹ The scheme of maneuver called for Company C to disengage and move south

⁶⁶Miller, p. 7.

⁶⁷7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 2; and, Stamford statement, p. 6.

⁶⁸Miller, p. 7; and, 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

⁶⁹7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

along the high ground east of the road as an advance guard. Company B was to cover the withdrawal of Company C and then to follow Company C. Company A was to have one platoon move south along the high ground west of the road while the remaining elements of the company followed the truck convoy. These elements were to march 100 meters west of the road. HHC and D Company were to accompany the truck convoy. Designated elements of A, C and D Companies were to form a rear guard under the command of MAJ Crosby P. Miller. Time of the withdrawal was set for 0430 hours.⁷⁰

When the plan for the withdrawal was announced in the Company C area some panic resulted. One man left his foxhole and many followed him to the rear. The Chinese appeared to realize that a withdrawal was in progress and increased their rate of fire.⁷¹ Elsewhere the withdrawal progressed without serious incident and link-up was made with the 31st Heavy Mortar Company.⁷²

The lead elements encountered a roadblock established at the bridge located at the eastern end of an inlet of the reservoir (CV547823). Fire was received from the southern side of the inlet. COL McLean thought this fire was from the

⁷⁰Jones, "Memorandum"; and, Miller, p. 8.

⁷¹Blumenson, interview of Campell.

⁷²Jones, "Memorandum."

3d Bn, 31st Inf and personally moved out across the ice about 400 meters west of the bridge in an attempt to stop the firing. He was seen to be hit four times but managed to cross the inlet whereupon he disappeared. A later search failed to find any trace of him. The fire came from a Chinese unit which had infiltrated behind the positions of the 3d Bn, 31st Inf.⁷³

From Position X, Map H, CPT Stamford directed close air support strikes on enemy mortar positions attempting to register on the truck convoy, forces pressing the battalion rear guard, and enemy positions east of the roadblock on the bridge.⁷⁴ LTC Faith directed elements of Companies A and C to attack across the ice. This attack was successful in both driving out the Chinese infiltrators with heavy losses and reducing the roadblock. The vehicles of the truck convoy successfully ran a gauntlet of small arms fire received from enemy positions east of the bridge and by 1230 hours link up with the 3d Bn, 31st Inf was completed.⁷⁵

During the afternoon, LTC Faith assumed command of the task force since COL McLoan was presumed lost or captured. He reorganized the perimeter with the 1st Bn, 32d Inf (MAJ Crosby P. Miller, Commanding) on the north, west and south;

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Stamford, statement, p. 7.

⁷⁵Miller, p. 9; and, 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

and, the 3d Bn, 31st Inf (MAJ Harvey H. Storms, Commanding) on the east. The 57th FA Bn (LTC Robert J. Tolley, Commanding), 31st Heavy Mortar Company, and D Battery (-), 15th AAA AW Bn occupied the center of the perimeter.⁷⁶

Close air support continued around the position throughout the afternoon. Pilots reported thousands of enemy troops moving south and destroyed numerous enemy gun and mortar positions outside the perimeter.⁷⁷

Resupply and evacuation of the wounded became critical. At 1530 hours the force received two aerial resupply missions. Only partial recovery of the bundles resulted as some of the parachutes landed within enemy positions. They contained only forty rounds of 105mm howitzer ammunition and no 40mm antiaircraft ammunition. Ammunition for the force remained in critical supply.⁷⁸ Four helicopter sorties evacuated a few of the more seriously wounded personnel including LTCs Embree and Reilly. Darkness precluded additional flights.⁷⁹

The evening and night of the 29th were relatively quiet. However, a few light probing attacks kept the troops on edge.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Stamford, statement, p. 7.

⁷⁸7th Inf Div., "Action Report," pp. 5 and 11.

⁷⁹Reilly, personal correspondence, 14 March 1975; and, 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

⁸⁰Miller, p. 10.

Meanwhile another attempt was made at 0800 hours to break through to the beleaguered battalions from the 31st rear command post. The 31st Tank Company minus one platoon and a composite infantry company again attempted to open the road. The attack stopped at the same location as the one on the previous day. The action resulted in two tanks destroyed and twenty members of the "infantry" company lost. The force withdrew at 1600 hours encountering heavy small arms, automatic weapons, and 3.5 inch rocket fire.⁸¹ The other tank platoon attempted to locate a route to the north which would bypass the enemy positions. This attempt also failed and an enemy attack on the platoon resulted in the destruction of two tanks and three personnel casualties. The rear command post sent an urgent message to the 7th Infantry Division Headquarters requesting that the 2d Bn, 31st Inf join the regiment as soon as possible.⁸²

The 2d Bn, 31st Inf(-) had departed from Hamhung by train and road early in the morning. By 1200 hours it arrived in Sangtong. There the traffic controllers ordered it to wait until X Corps gave permission to continue north. The trucks from X Corps did not arrive to move the Battalion. Later, it was found the trucks, loaded with ammunition, had

⁸¹7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 6; and, 31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1.

⁸²7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 6.

passed through Sangtong and continued north rather than off-loading the ammunition and picking up the battalion as originally planned. X Corps notified the battalion that trucks would be available at 0630 hours on 30 November. Therefore, the 2d Bn, 31st Inf(-) established defensive positions for the night at Sangtong.⁸³

During the night of 29 November, Koto came under heavy CCF attack from several directions. A serious threat to the X Corps main supply route between Koto and Hagaru developed and Hagaru received a heavy attack against positions held by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.⁸⁴

At 2047 hours, 29 November, X Corps issued Operations Instruction Number 19. This directed: attachment of all elements of the 7th Infantry Division in the Koto, Hagaru, and Changjin Reservoir areas to the 1st Marine Division; redeployment of one Marine Regimental Combat Team from Yudam to Hagaru without delay; the 1st Marine Division to gain contact with units of the 7th Infantry Division east of the Changjin Reservoir; establishment of a perimeter defense oriented on Hagaru by all forces in or north of Hagaru; reopening and securing of the main supply route between Koto and Hagaru by the 1st Marine Division; and, coordination of the movement of the 2d Bn, 31st Inf(-) to Koto by X Corps.⁸⁵

⁸³Ibid., p. 9.

⁸⁴X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," pp. 28-29.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 54.

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At 0820 hours, the 7th Infantry Division notified the 31st RCT that they were attached to the 1st Marine Division.⁸⁶

During the morning hours the enemy probed the weak perimeter defending the 31st RCT rear command post. At 1100 hours the 1st Marine Division ordered the rear command post to withdraw to Hagaru (Map I, p. 97). Personnel of the rear command post proceeded to destroy the ammunition dump and burn the ration supply point. At 1600 hours the units withdrew using the 31st Tank Company as advance and rear guard. At 1730 hours they arrived in Hagaru after having to fight a heavy rear guard action. Upon arrival, the 1st Marine Division integrated the units into the Hagaru defense.⁸⁷ This withdrawal left the forward battalions in an even more isolated position.

Meanwhile the 2d Bn, 31st Inf(-) had departed Sang-tong by truck at 0645 hours. The enemy attacked the column in Funchilin Pass at 1000 hours. The battalion deployed and drove the Chinese from the high ground east of the road. Enemy reinforcements were seen moving into the area and the battalion sent an officer to X Corps Headquarters to brief

⁸⁶7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 6.

⁸⁷7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 7; and, 31st Inf Regt, "Command Report," Resula, p. 1.

on the situation and the obvious threat to the X Corps main supply route. At 1830 hours X Corps ordered the battalion to continue north and join the 31st RCT. The battalion moved forward in a column formation.⁸⁸ This formation was probably the only feasible deployment of the battalion under the circumstances.

During the day MG Almond conferred with MG Barr, MG Smith and BG Hodes at Hagaru. He emphasized the urgent necessity of withdrawing the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments from Yudam to Hagaru immediately. He directed MG Barr and MG Smith to develop and submit a plan for the withdrawal of the remaining element of the 31st RCT (now known as Task Force Faith) to Hagaru. They recognized the evacuation of wounded personnel as the primary difficulty in executing the withdrawal.⁸⁹

In the area occupied by Task Force Faith, the day remained relatively quiet. The perimeter received some harrassing mortar fire of 50 or 60mm size, and about 15 rounds from a weapon estimated to be about 75mm.⁹⁰ Planes delivered airstrikes on the high ground surrounding the perimeter throughout the day.⁹¹ By using the damaged equipment of the Tactical Air Control Party with the 3d Bn, 31st

⁸⁸7th Inf Div., "Action Report," pp. 9-10.

⁸⁹X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," p. 16.

⁹⁰Miller, p. 10.

⁹¹Jones, "Memorandum."

Inf, CPT Stamford kept sufficient communications equipment operational to direct the strikes.⁹²

During the morning MG Barr flew into the perimeter by helicopter. He conversed briefly with LTC Faith and departed. According to MAJ Miller, LTC Faith was still under the impression that a relief force was attempting to break through to the task force.⁹³ Obviously the order to withdraw from Hudong meant this was not the case. The force received another airdrop within the perimeter. However, the task force continued to remain short of ammunition and medical supplies.⁹⁴

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On the night of 30 November-1 December the CCF attacked the major logistics base at Hagaru from the east and west in division strength (Map J, p. 98). The attack was repulsed only after heavy fighting.⁹⁵

Meanwhile the column of the 2d Bn, 31st Inf(-) continued its move north towards Koto. At 0100 hours it became heavily engaged with the enemy three kilometers south of Koto. The battalion fought forward closing Koto at 0900 hours.

⁹²Stamford, statement, p. 9.

⁹³Miller, p. 10; and 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

⁹⁴Miller, p. 11; and 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

⁹⁵X Corps, "Command Report for December 1950," (n.d.), p. 8.

There, X Corps attached it to the 1st Marine Regiment which assigned defensive positions within the perimeter. The battalion assumed control of all Army units in the Koto area including the remnants of Company B, 1st Bn, 31st Inf. No further attempt was made for this unit to reinforce Task Force Faith.⁹⁶

The lull in the action experienced by Task Force Faith had ended shortly after midnight. The Chinese attacked in strength, first against the southern portion of the perimeter occupied by Companies A and C of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. Shortly thereafter the entire eastern segment of the perimeter defended by the 3d Bn, 31st Inf came under heavy engagement. The Chinese supported their attack with a high volume of mortar fire. The twin 40mm and quad 50 caliber guns of Battery D(-), 15th AAA AW Bn proved extremely effective in repelling these attacks. However, a total of five penetrations of the perimeter occurred during the night. A task force reserve composed of personnel from the Heavy Mortar Company and the task force command post successfully contained the penetrations and restored the perimeter. At dawn the enemy did not withdraw as had been the normal procedure. Instead they pulled back three to four hundred meters and continued to deliver heavy small arms, artillery and mortar fire into the perimeter

⁹⁶7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 8 and 10; and, 7th Inf Div., "Command Report."

throughout the morning.⁹⁷

By 0730 hours over three hundred wounded, including all medical personnel, had accumulated within the perimeter of Task Force Faith.⁹⁸ LTC Faith called a meeting of his commanders and stated that he was ordering a withdrawal in an attempt to reach Hagaru. Communication with higher headquarters had been lost. Medical supplies were exhausted and the remaining quantities of artillery, mortar and anti-aircraft ammunition were critically low.⁹⁹

LTC Faith issued an order to destroy all vehicles except operable 2½ ton trucks and M16/M19 antiaircraft weapons carriers. Gasoline was to be drained from vehicles prior to destruction and redistributed. All wounded personnel were to be loaded on the trucks. Ammunition was to be collected from the dead and wounded, and redistributed. All equipment not accompanying the task force was to be destroyed including the 105mm howitzers and 4.2 inch mortars after the remaining ammunition had been fired.

LTC Faith designated the 1st Bn, 32d Inf as the lead element. He assigned it the mission of penetrating the enemy positions south along the road and clearing the road for movement of the truck convoy carrying the wounded. The

⁹⁷Jones, "Memorandum"; and Miller, p. 11.

⁹⁸7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 12.

⁹⁹Miller, p. 12.

Heavy Mortar Company and the 57th FA Bn were to follow the 1st Bn, 32d Inf, protect the truck convoy and fight as infantry. He ordered the 3d Bn, 31st Inf to protect the rear of the column. He interspersed weapons carriers of Battery D(-), 15th AAA AW Bn throughout the column. CPT Stamford, whose radio operator had just succeeded in repairing one of the air request radios, attempted to obtain at least ten close air support aircraft to assist the operation. He also requested a message be relayed to MG Barr of the intended breakout. The time for execution of the order was set to coincide with the arrival of the supporting aircraft.¹⁰⁰

Consideration was given to attempting the breakout down the ice of the frozen reservoir. LTC Faith discarded this course of action because it was feared that the thickness of the ice was incapable of supporting the trucks required for the evacuation of the wounded. Additionally, hope still remained that a relief force was attempting to reach the task force by way of the road. Successful evacuation of the wounded was of paramount importance in planning the breakout.¹⁰¹

In spite of limited visibility caused by falling snow, aircraft from the carrier U.S.S. Leyte successfully

¹⁰⁰ Jones, "Memorandum"; Miller, pp. 12-13; 7th Inf Div., "Act on Report," p. 12; and Stamford, statement, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Jones, personal correspondence, 15 January 1975; and, Miller, p. 3.

located the task force.¹⁰² At 1300 hours, LTC Faith ordered the breakout to commence. Company C, 1st Bn, 32d Inf, as advance guard on the road, moved south about twenty meters when it was brought under heavy enemy fire.¹⁰³ CPT Stamford directed an airstrike on the enemy but a napalm tank from the lead aircraft fell short. It burned eight to ten men from Company C causing momentary disorganization of the Company. LTC Faith personally rallied the troops who succeeded in overrunning the enemy position with the support of additional airstrikes.¹⁰⁴

At the first bend in the road after leaving the perimeter (Point A, Map J), the column encountered a log barricade. The M19 with the advance guard was able to clear the road sufficiently by pushing the logs to the side and allow passage of the trucks. As movement continued some leaders experienced difficulty in controlling the troops of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf. They kept attempting to seek cover from enemy fire in the shelter of the steep embankment to the west of the road. Messengers sent forward to inform the troops to maintain formation proved ineffective. Only personal contact by MAJ Miller succeeded in remedying the situation.¹⁰⁵

The bridge at Point B, Map J had been destroyed and was covered by fire from positions on Hill 1221, south of

¹⁰² Miller, p. 14. ¹⁰³ Jones, "Memorandum."

¹⁰⁴ Miller, p. 14; and, Stamford, statement, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ Miller, p. 5.

the bridge site. These enemy positions were in the same location as the positions occupied by the 1st Bn, 32d Inf upon arrival in the Changjin Reservoir area. A roadblock was approximately 1500 meters southeast of the bridge site where the road made a hairpin turn. Another enemy force with an estimated strength of three hundred was on the high ground to the northeast overlooking the valley east of the bridge site.¹⁰⁶

Task Force Faith deployed with the 1st Bn, 32d Inf attacking south toward the high ground of Hill 1221. The 57th FA Bn and the 3d Bn, 31st Inf moved southeast to secure the high ground east of the road and the valley east of the bridge site. The assault by the 1st Bn, 32d Inf was successful but instead of holding Hill 1221 the force continued south, returning to the road in the vicinity of Point C, Map J. Heavy casualties were received in the assault on Hill 1221. The Chinese were able to close in behind the force once it had crossed the hill. One element of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf led by 1Lt Cecil G. Smith (Company Commander of A Company, 1st Bn, 32d Inf) was cut off by the enemy on the ridgeline west of Hill 1221 precluding their rejoining the remainder of the force. By this time Smith's force was out

¹⁰⁶Jones, "Memorandum"; Miller, pp. 15-16; and, Stamford, statement, pp. 10-11.

of ammunition and so they moved southwest to the reservoir. From there they went south on the reservoir ice and arrived at Hagaru at 1930 hours.¹⁰⁷

Meanwhile the force located a bypass of the destroyed bridge. The tracked vehicles crossed the stream with ease but the trucks had to be pulled across by a cable attached to one of the M19 weapons carriers. After crossing the stream the trucks were sheltered from direct enemy fire from the south by a high bank on the south side of the road. By the time all the vehicles had negotiated the bypass darkness was approaching.¹⁰⁸

To the east of the bridge, the enemy forced the 3d Bn, 31st Inf and the 57th FA Bn off the high ground. This enabled the CCF to place direct fire on the truck convoy and many of the casualties in the trucks suffered additional wounds. Additionally, heavy casualties were sustained by troops of all three battalions in the valley east of the bridge.¹⁰⁹

By this time many of the key officers and noncommissioned officers of the task force had been wounded including MAJ Miller and MAJ Storms.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Blumenson, interview of Smith; Jones, "Memorandum"; and, Stamford, statement, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁸Jones, "Memorandum"; and, Miller, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁹Jones, "Memorandum"; Miller, p. 16; and, Stamford, statement, p. 11.

¹¹⁰Blumenson, interview of Campbell, interview of Smith; Jones, "Memorandum"; and, Stamford, statement, p. 11.

CPT Erwin B. Bigger (Commanding, Company D, 1st Bn, 32d Inf) organized and directed an assault on the high ground west of the road by a group of approximately one hundred personnel, mostly walking wounded. Using a mortar aiming stake as a crutch, CPT Bigger led his group up the hill. Again the Chinese closed in behind the force causing CPT Bigger to load his group onto the ice. From there they moved south to Hagaru.¹¹¹

Task Force Faith finally managed to secure Hill 1221. However, the enemy roadblock at the hairpin curve, consisting of at least two machineguns, still controlled movement on the road. LTC Faith ordered MAJ Jones to gather as many men as possible and join him on the high ground south of the bridge for an attempt to reduce the roadblock from the flank. LTC Faith went forward to organize the troops already holding the high ground. MAJ Jones succeeded in locating about two hundred men and joined LTC Faith at dark in the vicinity of Point C, Map J. LTC Faith organized the total available force into two groups of about 150 men each and prepared to assault the roadblock. Air support was not available as it was too dark. LTC Faith, leading one group attacked north on the left side of the road. MAJ Jones led the other group in an attack on the right (east) side of the road.¹¹² The

¹¹¹Blumenson, interview of Campbell.

¹¹²Jones, "Memorandum."

combined attacks successfully reduced the roadblock but LTC Faith was mortally wounded in the assault by a hand grenade.¹¹³

After the clearing of the roadblock, MAJ Jones continued north on the road to the truck convoy. Many of the trucks had been severely damaged by enemy fire. He directed the unloading of the first three trucks which were disabled. They were then pushed off the road to allow the resumption of movement. Hundreds of wounded personnel had accumulated and insufficient space was available on the remaining trucks to transport them. Unable to locate LTC Faith, MAJ Jones decided that his only viable course of action at that time was to post guards with the wounded and attempt to break through to Hagaru. His purpose was to obtain help using as many able bodied and walking wounded personnel as possible to force the breakthrough. Command and control in the dark was limited to physical contact. He directed movement of the vehicles that could still be driven and moved south about one kilometer to Point C, Map J. There the vehicles that had been destroyed in the medical unit ambush and the attempted relief efforts by the tank-infantry team blocked the road. He posted guards with the wounded and instructed them to attempt to clear the road sufficiently to allow

¹¹³Blumenson, interview of Campell; and, Stamford, statement, p. 15.

passage of the trucks. With the remaining available personnel, he struck out for Hagaru, catching up with several groups of stragglers in route.¹¹⁴

On approaching Hudong at Point D, Map J, the group left the road and followed the railroad track. In the vicinity of CV523744 (Point E, Map J), they came under enemy automatic weapons fire. The group disintegrated but the majority of the personnel successfully reached the reservoir ice and continued to Hagaru.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, CPT Stamford had seen MAJ Jones leading the first trucks of the convoy south. CPT Stamford assisted in clearing two more damaged trucks of wounded and pushing them off the road. He then moved toward the front of the convoy. The guards left by MAJ Jones had successfully cleared the road to allow passage of the trucks past the tanks and medical vehicles. CPT Stamford reached the lead truck about four hundred meters south of Point C, Map J. There he found that LTC Faith had been wounded and placed in the cab of the first truck. He asked LTC Faith if he wanted him to attempt to reach Hagaru that night. LTC Faith replied with a very weak "yes." It appeared that he was in extreme pain and barely conscious.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Jones, "Memorandum."

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Stamford, statement, pp. 14-16.

At Point F, Map J, they crossed over to the railroad in order to bypass a destroyed bridge on the road. Movement continued until, upon approaching Hudong Village, the convoy met intense enemy fire and was stopped for the last time. It was about midnight, 1 December.¹¹⁷

EPILOGUE

On 2 and 3 December survivors of Task Force Faith continued to arrive in small groups at Hagaru.¹¹⁸ On 2 December, LTC Berry K. Anderson (Operations Officer of the 31st RCT and senior Army officer at Hagaru) led a tank-infantry team north from Hagaru in an attempt to reach the remains of Task Force Faith. It met heavy opposition and was recalled without success.¹¹⁹

LTC O. L. Beall (Commanding Officer, 1st Motor Transport Battalion, 1st Marine Division) organized a rescue party which moved north on the reservoir ice by jeep and sled and succeeded in rescuing 319 survivors of Task Force Faith. Nearly all of these personnel were wounded or frostbitten. A Marine reconnaissance patrol managed to reach the trucks of

¹¹⁷Miller, pp. 17-18; and, Stamford, statement, pp. 14-16.

¹¹⁸Miller, p. 23; and, 7th Inf Div., "Action Report," p. 12.

¹¹⁹Montross, p. 245, citing 1st Marine Division, G3 Journal, 1-2 December 1950, "Entry 18.

the convoy in the vicinity of Hudong and counted over three hundred dead.¹²⁰

Total casualty figures for the 31st RCT action at the Changjin Reservoir, if they exist, could not be located. Only 385 able bodied members of Task Force Faith reached Hagaru where they were formed into a provisional battalion to assist the 1st Marine Division in the breakout to Hungnam. An estimated eleven hundred Army casualties were flown out from Hagaru between 1 and 6 December. Some of these were personnel from Army units stationed at Hagaru other than those with the 31st RCT.¹²¹

After LTC Faith was wounded on 1 December the task force of the 31st RCT ceased to exist as a military unit. It was dark. Communication other than by personal contact was nonexistent. Most of the officers and noncommissioned officers were casualties. Some of the remaining officers made no effort to assume command in spite of the obvious gravity of the situation.¹²²

X Corps estimated the enemy force that attacked the 31st RCT as two CCR divisions. These were probably the 79th

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Jones, "Memorandum"; Montross, p. 245; and, G. P. Smith, "Looking Back at Chosin," Marine Corps Gazette, (December 1960), p. 31.

¹²²Blumenson, interview of Campell; Jones, "Memorandum"; Jones, personal correspondence 15 January 1975; and, Stamford, statement, pp. 14-15.

and 80th Divisions of the 27th Chinese Communist Army.¹²³

Thus ended the combat action of the 31st RCT on the eastern side of the Changjin Reservoir.

¹²³X Corps, "W.D., 1-30 November 1950," pp. 23 and 25.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF TACTICS AND DOCTRINE

In order to form a basis for analysis of the adequacy of current U.S. Army doctrine relative to encircled units and breakout operations, a search of doctrinal publications current at the time of the 31st RCT action at the Changjin Reservoir was conducted. No references as to specific guidance for encircled United States forces was located.¹ Additionally, a study conducted by the Operations Research Office published in 1954 stated: "There is at this time, however, no doctrine presented in the [field] manuals on alternatives of action open to a unit isolated in enemy rear areas."² This search was followed by a review of present U.S. Army field manuals applicable to infantry, armor, and artillery units. The only manual in which was found specific doctrinal guidance on encircled U.S. Army forces and breakout operations was The Infantry Battalions.³

¹Department of the Army (hereafter referred to as DA), Field Service Regulations: Operations, FM 100-5, (1949); DA, Infantry Battalion, FM 7-20, (1950); and, DA, Infantry Regiment, (1950).

²Gene Z. Hanrahan and William M. Rossiter, Military Potential of Combat Units Isolated in Enemy Rear Areas, ORO-T-297, (Chevy Chase, Md.: John Hopkins University, Operations Research Office, 1954), p. 25.

³DA, The Infantry Battalions, FM 7-20, (1969), pp. (7-18)-(7-21).

To complement the review of current Army doctrine, an inquiry was made as to the inclusion of doctrine pertaining to encircled units and breakout operations in the curricula of U.S. Army Service Schools. No block of instruction in these subjects was being taught at the U.S. Army Armor and Artillery Schools. A two hour class based on the material in The Infantry Battalions was included in the Advanced Officers Course by the Infantry School.⁴ A similar class based on the case study method of instruction was incorporated in the common curriculum of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College during the 1974-1975 school year.⁵ The conclusion drawn from these searches was that The Infantry Battalions provided the primary source of existing U.S. Army doctrine pertaining to encircled units breakout operations. The scope of this manual was limited to doctrinal guidance for the tactical employment and training of infantry battalions.⁶ No evidence of current doctrine for encircled units or breakout operations pertaining to other sized units, or armor and/or artillery units was located.

⁴U.S. Army Armor School, correspondence in response to questions from this writer, 6 January 1975; U.S. Army Field Artillery School, correspondence in response to questions from this writer, 9 January 1975; and, U.S. Army Infantry School, correspondence in response to questions from this writer, 9 January 1975.

⁵U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, "Forward Deployed Force (European Setting)," Subject R3161-6, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas [School Year 1974-75]).

⁶DA, The Infantry Battalions, FM 7-20, (1969), p. 1-1.

The Infantry Battalions defined an encircled force as a unit "which is surrounded by an enemy force which has cut all ground routes of evacuation and reinforcement."⁷ The combat action of the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir encompassed three separate examples of encircled forces by this definition. On 28 and 29 November the 1st Bn, 32d Inf was encircled. Ground lines of communication were severed between the battalion and the other elements of the combat team. The second encirclement occurred when the main supply route to the forward units of the RCT was cut by the ambush of the medical convoy on 28 November. From then through the abortive attempt to breakout as a unit on 1 December, the major combat elements of the 31st RCT were isolated from ground resupply or evacuation. The third encirclement was created when the CCF occupied positions and roadblocks on the X Corps main supply route between Koto and Hagaru. In this instance, the forces encircled included major units of the 1st Marine Division as well as the 31st RCT. This third encirclement was addressed in this thesis only in that it precluded attempted reinforcement of the 31st RCT by the 2d Bn, 31st Inf(-) and Company B, 1st Bn, 31st Inf.

The Infantry Battalions also stated that: "In a fluid situation when units are widely dispersed, commanders must plan for and accept encirclement in accomplishing their mission."⁸ A more accurate description of the situation

⁷Ibid., p. 7-18.

⁸Ibid.

which existed in the X Corps area in late November 1950 could not be stated. MG Almond assessed the X Corps position as:

That it would be very difficult to control these widely-spread Units but I realized that the nature of the X Corps mission ("To clear NE Korea of the disorganized enemy as far north as the Northern Korean border.") required independent action by battalion commanders in many situations. In view of the tasks at hand we had to depend upon the tactical judgment of the Battalion (or higher) commander in many situations (even to all around defense) and to support him (or withdraw him) if insurmountable situations arose. These did arise when the disorganized NK Troops were suddenly replaced by ten Chinese Divisions in the Chosin [Changjin] Reservoir area.⁹

The basic cause of both encirclements in the area of the 31st RCT was the ability of the CCF to introduce undetected, fresh multi-division sized forces and to maneuver those forces without requiring the use of the existing road network.

Neither of the infantry battalions of the 31st RCT was given the mission of securing the regimental main supply route along the eastern side of the Changjin Reservoir.¹⁰ Since the operation was being conducted with an open regimental right flank, along a corridor formed by the reservoir, the CCF were able to envelop the right flank and cut the

⁹Edward M. Almond [LTG, U.S. Army Ret.], "Memorandum: War in Korea, 1950, Reply to Questions By Major Robert M. Coombs, U.S. Army Student, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas," (20 January 1975), p. 1.

¹⁰Robert E. Jones [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 15 January 1975; and, William R. Reilly [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 14 March 1974.

main supply route with little interference except from aircraft supporting the operation during daylight hours. Once the main supply route was cut, sufficient combat power was unavailable to reopen and hold the supply line while continuing to accomplish the assigned mission of protecting the right flank of the 1st Marine Division.

In retrospect, X Corps concluded as lessons learned from the action, that units must conduct reconnaissance in every direction and that all units must habitually conduct reconnaissance along supply lines. Also, when a unit is advancing through a corridor, security elements must be placed in position to observe possible enemy movement in adjacent compartments and corridors. Dominant terrain must be occupied or controlled prior to advancing through a corridor. Seizing and/or controlling commanding terrain should control the rate of movement through a corridor.¹¹

In the case of the 31st RCT, dominant terrain controlling the key road link to Hagaru was not secured. Adequate reconnaissance of the initial defensive positions established by the 3d Bn, 31st Inf was not accomplished due to arrival of darkness while moving into position.¹² As so often happens, these points could have been entitled "lessons

¹¹X Corps (Korea), "War Diary: X Corps Monthly Summary, 1-30 November 1950, Drive to the Yalu, CCF [Chinese Communist Forces] Counterattack," (n.d.), p. 18.

¹²Reilly.

relearned" as each of them were expressly covered in existing tactical doctrine.¹³

The composition of the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir (an infantry battalion of the 31st Regiment and an infantry battalion of the 32d Regiment) was not in keeping with the doctrine of 1950 which stated that a regiment was a fixed unit. Doctrine further stated that employment of a regiment as a RCT (normally composed of an infantry regiment, a light artillery battalion, an antiaircraft battery and an engineer company) was not the preferred role.¹⁴ MG Almond explained the composition of the 31st RCT: "cross attachment [of battalions between regiments] was not normal. In this situation this employment was an expedient necessitated by the time element and the location of the most available elements."¹⁵ No evidence was uncovered that this unusual composition of the RCT had any bearing on the conduct of the action other than that the force was too weak to cope with the Chinese onslaught. The composition of the force from a command and control standpoint was similar to the brigade organization in today's doctrine.¹⁶

¹³DA, Field Service Regulations: Operations, FM 100-5, (1949), pp. 47, 210 and 211.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 3; and, DA, Infantry Regiment, FM 7-40, p. 5.

¹⁵Almond, p. 1.

¹⁶DA, The Infantry Brigades, FM 7-30, (1969), p. 1-1.

A unique aspect of the task organization was the attachment of a tactical air control party to each of the infantry battalions. This procedure was standard throughout X Corps. It provided simplified communications procedures and more responsive provision and direction of close air support.¹⁷ Responsiveness of close air support played a key role throughout the operation. The fact that its use was limited to daylight hours was only due to the state of the art existing in 1950.

On 29 November, once the Chinese succeeded in encircling the 1st Bn, 32d Inf and the portion of the 31st RCT(-) forward of Hudong, a number of problems developed specifically caused by the encirclements. Since the problems of each of the forces were similar and continued to mount after link-up of the two forces on 29 November, they are addressed as one topic.

No personnel were available to replace casualties as they occurred. This caused an ever increasing loss of combat power of the encircled units. Forces within the encirclements were incapable of retaining and/or regaining terrain essential to the defense and safety of the forces. Counterattacks to regain lost terrain only resulted in increasing the casualty rate in some instances, as the objectives of the attacks were

¹⁷X Corps (Korea), "Infantry Battalion Tactical Air Control Parties," (n.d.), (Mimeographed.), p. 2.

not seized. Casualties among officers and noncommissioned officers reduced the ability to command and control the units. This also resulted in a gradual reduction in professional discipline within the enlisted ranks. X Corps stated that "the command channel must be trained at least 3 deep in order to continue effective action in spite of heavy casualties among the leaders."¹⁸

Casualties overtaxed the medical personnel and facilities within the encirclements. This was compounded when medical personnel themselves became casualties. The low temperatures (as low as -27°F) caused additional cold injuries to many personnel previously wounded due to lack of adequate shelter and evacuation capability.¹⁹

Fire support from within the encirclement decreased as supporting units came under attack and available ammunition diminished. The need to conserve available supplies was not always practiced. Some poor artillery targets were selected and rounds expended on them. These included suspected enemy positions and enemy troops seen moving on distant ridgelines at times when support aircraft were available on station to

¹⁸X Corps (Korea), "War Diary: X Corps Monthly Summary, 1-30 November, p. 18.

¹⁹C. P. Miller, [LTC, USA], "Chosin Reservoir, Nov-Dec 1950," (October 1953), (Unpublished narrative submitted in fulfillment of a requirement while a student at USACGSC. LTC Miller was the Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment during the action at the Changjin Reservoir. Copy in this writers possession), p. 14.

engage them. Much 40mm ammunition was expended on poorly identified targets. Mortar ammunition was fired without apparent regard for future requirements.²⁰

Aerial resupply was not responsive to the need for rations, medical supplies and specific types of ammunition. The size of the perimeter held by the force made delivery of supplies by parachute difficult.

Communications with higher headquarters outside the encirclement deteriorated with time and finally became nonexistent. This was attributable to both combat losses of equipment and lack of repair parts. No record of the effects of the cold weather on batteries or communication equipment was documented but it could have been a contributing factor.²¹ Loss of communication required an internal decision to attempt breakout on 1 December. It also precluded accurate knowledge of the status of relief operations or coordination of the breakout with support forces in Hagaru.

Present doctrine pertaining to forces within an encirclement was minimal. The only guidance was the necessity of maintenance of high standards of discipline, particularly by officers and noncommissioned officers; and, development of a strict unity of command when more than one unit is included

²⁰U.S. Marine Historical Branch, statement on file of CPT Edward P. Stamford, USMC(NA), (n.d.), p. 18.

²¹DA, Northern Operations, FM 31-71, (1971), pp. 5-1 and 5-3.

in the encirclement.²² While encircled, unity of command only became a problem in the 31st RCT during the last stages of the attempted breakout on 1 December.

The breakout operation by the 1st Bn, 32d Inf on 29 November was based on the decision by COL McLean to consolidate his forces. Little intelligence was available on the enemy dispositions. The only plausible route to effect linkup with the 3d Bn, 31st Inf was astride the road to the south. This was necessitated by the requirement to evacuate the wounded in the unit vehicles. While the enemy was probably weakest to the south, it was not a determining factor in route selection. The time for the execution of the breakout was based on enemy pressure, not deception or availability of maximum fire support. Since it was dark, air support was not available. The force was organized with an advance guard, main body, flank guard, rear guard, and detachments left in contact. No attempt was made to deceive the enemy as to direction of attack. Concealment of the withdrawal from the enemy was lost by the panic in Company C as the shift from defense to withdrawal commenced.

Nonessential supplies and equipment were not evacuated with the force. They were not destroyed for fear of disclosing to the Chinese that the breakout was in progress. Communications with the 3d Bn, 31st Inf were not adequate during the linkup as evidenced by the inability of COL McLean

to determine the source of fire being received by the battalion upon approaching the reservoir inlet.

While specific doctrine for the conduct of breakout operations did not exist in 1950, it is apparent through study of the doctrine of that time, that a combination of the tactics for a movement to contact and a night withdrawal was improvised in planning and executing the breakout.²³ Present doctrine contained in The Infantry Battalions thoroughly covers all of the salient characteristics of the breakout by the 1st Bn, 32d Inf.²⁴

The same basic tactics were used by the 31st RCT (Task Force Faith) in the attempted breakout on 1 December. In addition to enemy resistance, a number of factors contributed to the failure to reach Hagaru as a fighting unit.

Aerial resupply, particularly of ammunition, was inadequate to support the operation. Forty millimeter and 50 caliber ammunition for the antiaircraft weapons used in the ground support role would have greatly enhanced the force's suppressive fire capability.

The route of breakout was predicated on the use of the road to Hagaru. Again, this was necessitated by the perceived requirement to evacuate all wounded personnel. The

²³DA, Infantry Battalion, FM 7-20, (1950).

²⁴DA, The Infantry Battalions, FM 7-20, (1969), pp. (7-17)-(7-21).

only feasible means of accomplishing the evacuation was by vehicle. An alternative route down the frozen reservoir was not considered viable since the ice was believed incapable of supporting the vehicles. Additionally, the task force still held out hope of meeting a relief force during the breakout.

No deception plan was used. The CCF had excellent observation of the force within the perimeter. Command elements of the force were decimated. After dark no control could be exercised from a central level except by personal contact. Some officers did not attempt to restore unity to the force after breaching the roadblock at the hairpin turn. No assistance from forces in Hagaru was received. Communications between Task Force Faith and Hagaru were nonexistent.

It is evident that the attempted breakout was made too late. After juncture of the 1st Bn, 32d Inf and the 3d Bn, 31st Inf within the tight perimeter on the shore of the reservoir, the only tactical purpose served by the task force was to deny use of the north-south road to the enemy. It was already evident by the CCF attacks on Hagaru and Koto, that use of the road was not essential to the Chinese.

To presume that the force continued to protect the flank of the 1st Marine Division by occupying a six hundred by two thousand meter perimeter is incomprehensible. The decision to breakout came too late.

Present doctrine emphasized aerial resupply and evacuation of casualties by air. Even with the advances

in aerial delivery techniques and helicopters, enemy air superiority, antiaircraft defenses and/or adverse weather conditions may hamper or preclude their use in support of encircled forces.²⁵ An encircled force must retain the ability to breakout on the ground.

²⁵DA, The Infantry Battalions, FM 7-20, (1969), p. 7-20.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the combat example of the 31st RCT on the eastern shore of the Changjin Reservoir provides an excellent example of the problems encountered by forces which become encircled by the enemy. The fluid situation envisioned on the modern battlefield with units defending on wide fronts against numerically superior forces closely approximates the conditions faced by the 31st RCT. While the restricting features of the mountainous terrain and the cold environment prevalent in North Korea effected the conduct of combat operations, the basic tactical considerations of encircled forces and breakout operations were present.

Tactical doctrine for forces within an encirclement is currently inadequate. The major problems encountered by the 31st RCT: attrition of combat power due to personnel and equipment losses, increasing dependence on fire support external to the encirclement, heavy burden on medical facilities, and command actions when communications with external forces are lost, are not contained in current doctrine.

Doctrine should place emphasis on conservation of available resources within the encirclement on the assumption

that further resupply will not be received. Junior leaders must be ready and willing to assume greater responsibilities as senior officers and noncommissioned officers become casualties.

Commanders and headquarters senior to the encircled force must aggressively render all possible assistance to the encircled force. When communications with the force is lost, this includes active anticipation and fulfillment of the encircled force's needs. Every effort must be made to resupply the unit with equipment and supplies necessary for the conduct of combat operations and to relieve the unit of the burden of wounded and injured personnel.

Timely decisions must be made to reinforce the unit or to order breakout operations. The longer the force remains encircled, the weaker it becomes. The necessity for the encircled commander to make a timely decision to breakout when communications with higher headquarters has been lost cannot be overemphasized.

The doctrine currently contained in The Infantry Battalions pertaining to breakout operations is comprehensive and adequate with one exception.¹ In this combat example evacuation of the wounded became an overriding consideration in the selection of the breakout route. Had Task Force Faith left the incapacitated troops with selected medical personnel,

¹Department of the Army, The Infantry Battalions, FM 7-20, (1969), pp. (7-18)-(7-21).

either at the perimeter (CV5481) or on the north side of Hill 1221 (CV5378), and attempted the breakout on foot down the ice with the able bodied and walking wounded, it is highly possible that a significantly larger proportion of the force would have ultimately survived. Such a decision, particularly when engaged with an enemy not a party to the Geneva Convention, would be abhorrent to most U.S. Commanders. A commander making such a decision would open himself to distain by his subordinates, humiliation by his contemporaries and probable court-martial by his superiors. Specific doctrinal guidance in this area is required.

As currently published, this doctrine applied only to the various types of infantry battalions. As a result of this study it is recommended that:

a. Doctrine for encircled forces be published in an Army Field Manual applicable to all combat, combat support and combat service support units.

b. Additional doctrinal guidance be provided concerning the conduct of combat operations and supply economy by forces once encircled and prior to commencing breakout and/or relief operations.

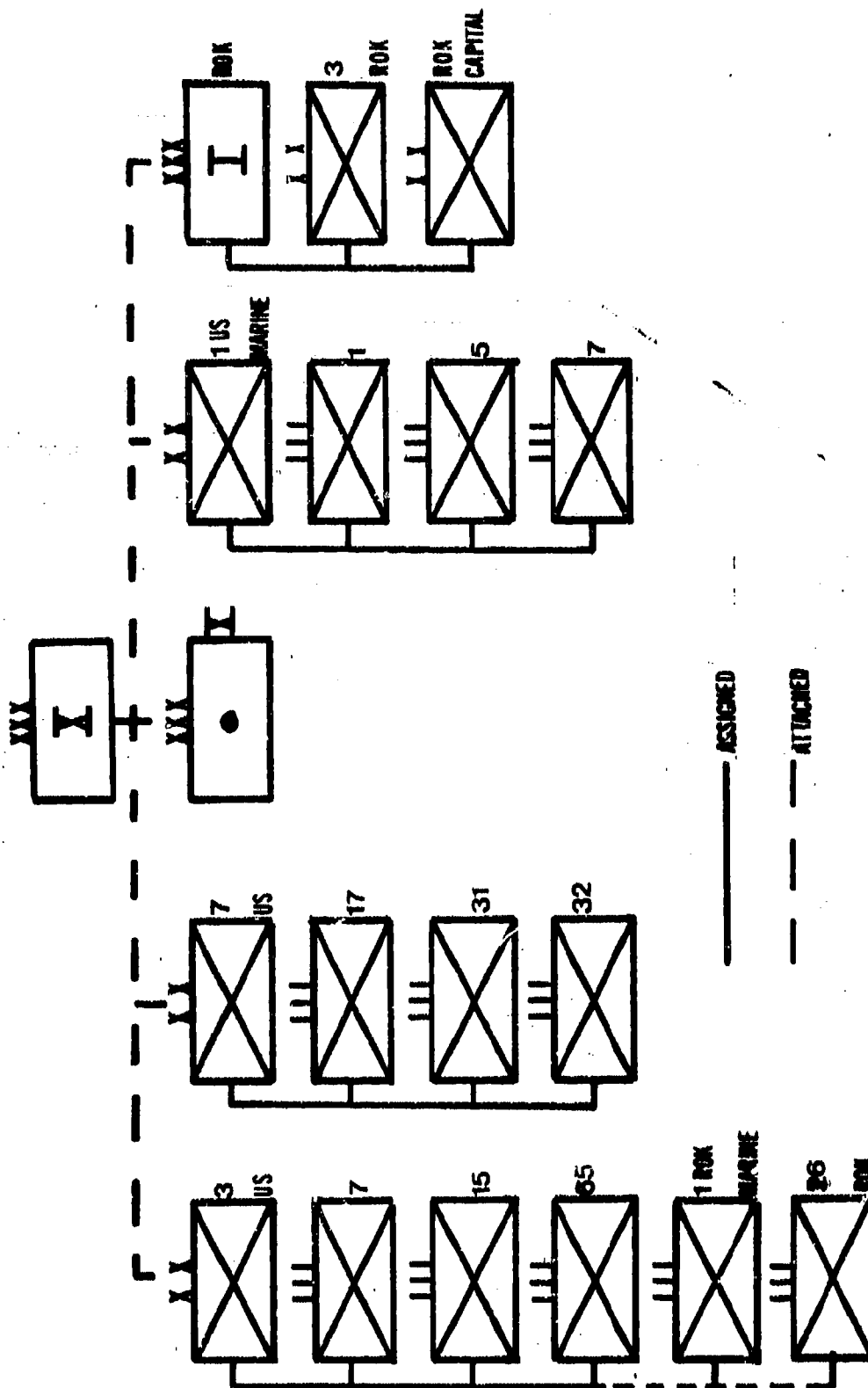
c. Specific doctrinal guidance be provided regarding the evacuation of incapacitated personnel with a breakout force, when the probability exists that such evacuation will jeopardize the success of the breakout.

d. Other historical examples of encircled forces and breakout operations be reviewed to confirm the validity of the conclusions reached in this study.

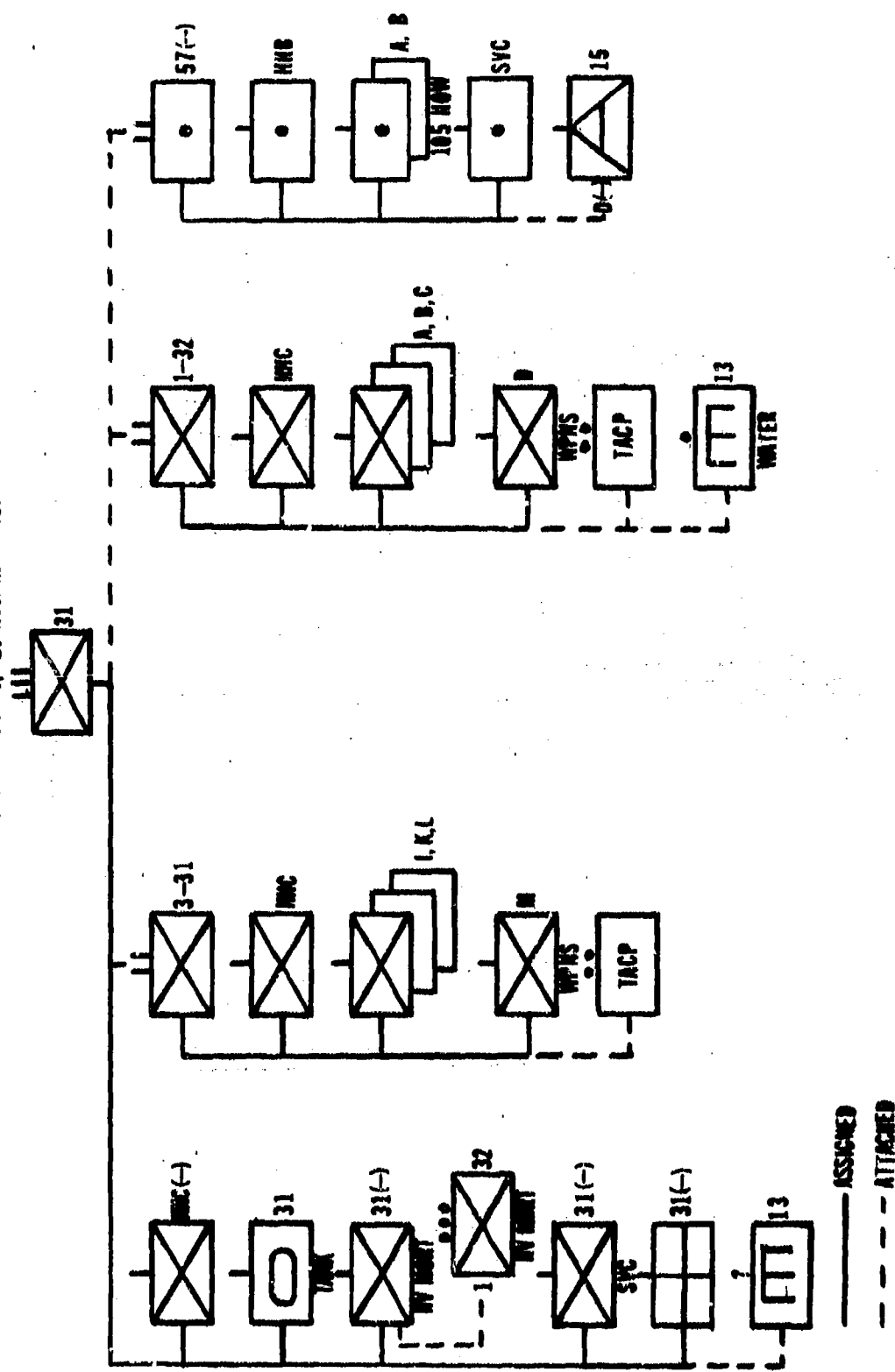
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: I CORPS ORGANIZATION CHART

26 NOVEMBER, 1950



APPENDIX B: 31ST REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM
ORGANIZATION CHART, 27 NOVEMBER 1959



APPENDIX C: ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF
31ST REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

27 NOVEMBER 1950

UNIT	U.S. STRENGTH ¹	KATUSA STRENGTH ²	KATUSA EST ³	EST ⁴ TOE	OTHER	TOTAL
PHC. 31st Regt (-)					109 ⁵	109
Tank Co., 31st Regt				143		143
Heavy Mortar Co., 31st Regt (-)				106		106
Heavy Mortar Flat., 32d Regt				44		44
Service Co., 31st Regt (-)					2 ⁵	2
Medical Co., 31st Regt (-) ²				174	0 ⁵	174
Co C., 13th Engr Bn						
1st Bn. 32d Regt						
HFC	101		60			161
Co. A	145		60			195
Co. B	139		60			189
Co. C	150		60			200
Co. D	137		60			187
USMC TACP					5 ⁷	5
Det. 13th Engr Bn				2		2

APPENDIX C: (Cont'd)

UNIT	U.S. STRENGTH ¹	KATUSA ² STRENGTH	KATUSA EST ³	EST TOE ⁴	OTHER	TOTAL
3d Bn. 31st Regt						
HHC	96	56				152
Co. I	157		60			217
Co. K	141	59				200
Co. L	148	67				215
Co. M	137		60			187
USAF TACP					27	2
57th FA Bn (-)						
HHB	141		50			191
Btry A	110		50			160
Btry B	107		50			157
Service Btry				74		74
Btry D(-), 15th AAA AW Bn				81		81
TOTAL						3155

APPENDIX C: SOURCES

¹Martin Blumenson [CPT, U.S. Army, "Chosin Reservoir, 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, 24-30 November 1950," Item #102, 3d Historical Detachment, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea (EUSAK), (1951), (microfilm copy). CPT Blumenson cited personnel strength figures obtained from unit morning reports.

²Ibid. Figures quoted are KATUSAs reported missing in action from the units indicated.

³The Artillery School, Department of Training Publications and Aids, "Debriefing Report Number 17," (Fort Sill, Okla., (21 September 1951), p. 13, quoting MAJ Walter W. Sears; Robert E. Jones [COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer 15 January 1975; and, William R. Reilly [COL, U.S. Army, (Ret.)], personal correspondence to this writer, 14 March 1975.

⁴Army Ground Forces, "The New Infantry Division," (December 1946). Units known to be present with the Regimental Combat Team and for which no actual present for duty strength was located, were assumed to be at full Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) strength. These figures assume strengths for both United States and KATUSA personnel.

⁵31st Infantry Regiment, "Command Report, 1-4 December (INCL[usive]," (10 March 1951), Inclosure 5, CPT George A. Resula, "Summary of Operations in the Chosin Reservoir Area," (n.d.), p. 1. Personnel from Company C, 13th Engineer Battalion and enlisted personnel of the 31st Service Company were included in the figure for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment.

⁶Army Ground Forces. This figure does not include one battalion medical platoon equivalent that normally would have been attached to the third infantry battalion of a regiment.

⁷U.S. Marine Historical Branch, statement on file of CPT Edward P. Stamford, USMC (NA), (n.d.), p. 8; and, Reilly.

APPENDIX D: CHRONOLOGY

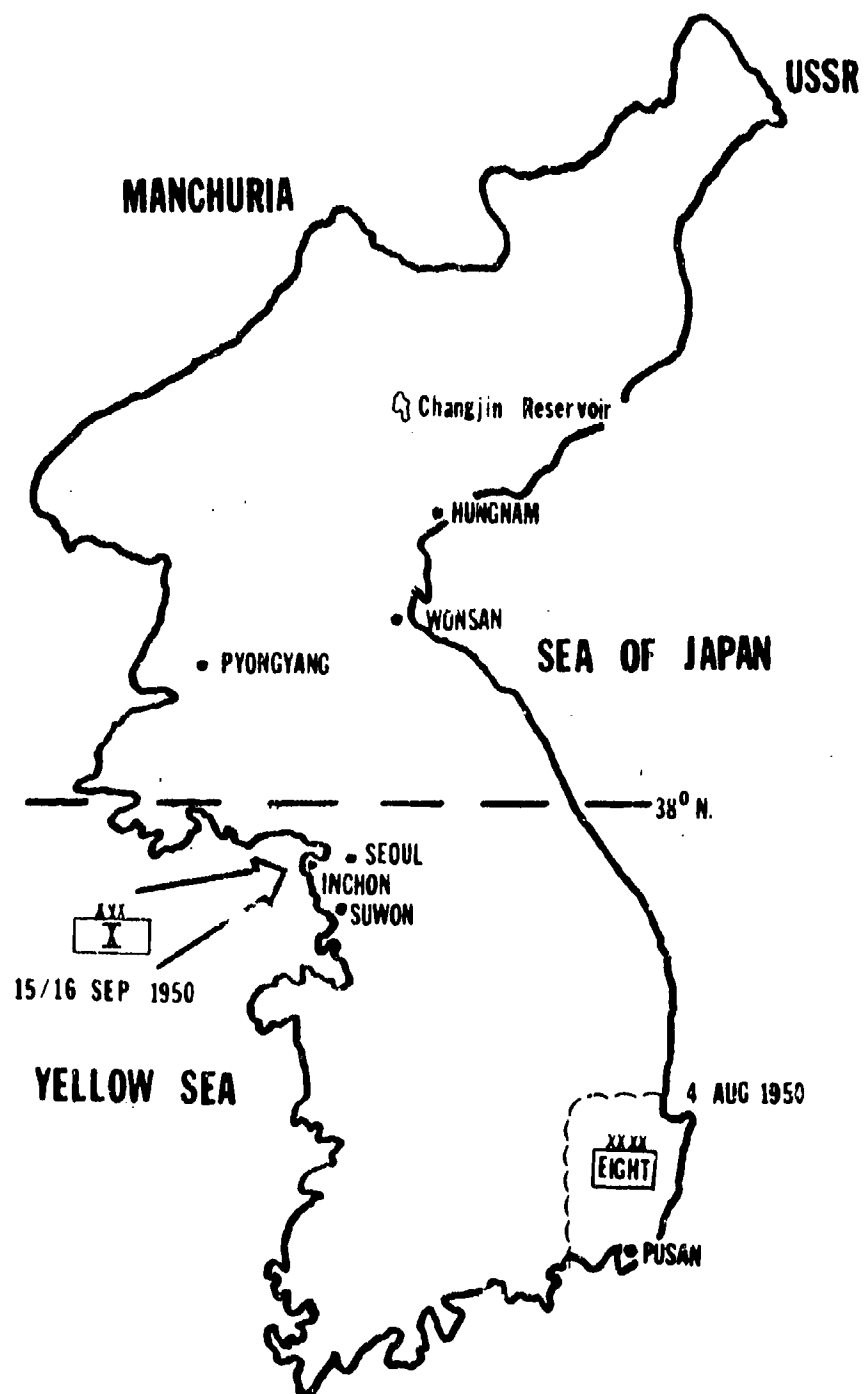
- 24 Jun 50: Korean War started.
- 26 Jul 50: 7th Infantry Division alerted for deployment to Korea.
- 15 Sep 50: Invasion by X Corps at Inchon, Korea.
- 26 Sep 50: X Corps linkup with 8th Army at Suwon, Korea.
- 5 Oct 50: 7th Infantry Division began movement to Pusan, Korea.
- 29 Oct 50: 7th Infantry Division landed at Iwon, Korea.
- 24 Nov 50: 1st Bn, 32d Inf ordered to Changjin Reservoir.
- 25 Nov 50: 1st Bn, 32d Inf occupied positions north of Hudong on eastern side of Changjin Reservoir.
- 26 Nov 50: 31st RCT established a command post at Hudong. 5th Marine Regiment commenced withdrawal from the eastern side of Changjin Reservoir.
- 27 Nov 50: 1st Bn, 32d inf moved north to defensive positions. 3d Bn, 31st Inf; 57th FA Bn; 31st Heavy Mortar Company; and, 31st Tank Company joined the 31st RCT at Changjin Reservoir. 2d Bn, 31st Inf ordered to Changjin Reservoir. CCF initiated probing attacks on 1st Bn, 32d Inf.
- 28 Nov 50: CCF conducted coordinated attack on the 31st RCT. 31st Medical Company elements ambushed north of Hudong encircling forward units of 31st RCT. 31st Tank/Inf Team repulsed north of Hudong. 1st Bn, 32d Inf encircled. Company B, 1st Bn, 31st Inf arrived at Koto. 2d Bn, 31st Inf remained in Hamhung.
- 29 Nov 50: 1st Bn, 32d Inf broke out to the location of the 3d Bn, 31st Inf. COL McLean, Commanding the 31st RCT, missing in action. 31st Tank/Inf Team again repulsed north of Hudong. 7th Infantry Division units vicinity Changjin Reservoir attached to the 1st Marine Division. 2d Bn, 31st Inf arrived in Sangtong.
- 30 Nov 50: 31st RCT rear command post ordered to withdraw to Hagaru. 2d Bn, 31st Inf fought towards Koto. CCF attacked Task Force Faith in strength.

1 Dec 50: CCF attacks continued against Task Force Faith.
2d Bn, 31st Inf attached to 1st Marine Regiment
in Koto.

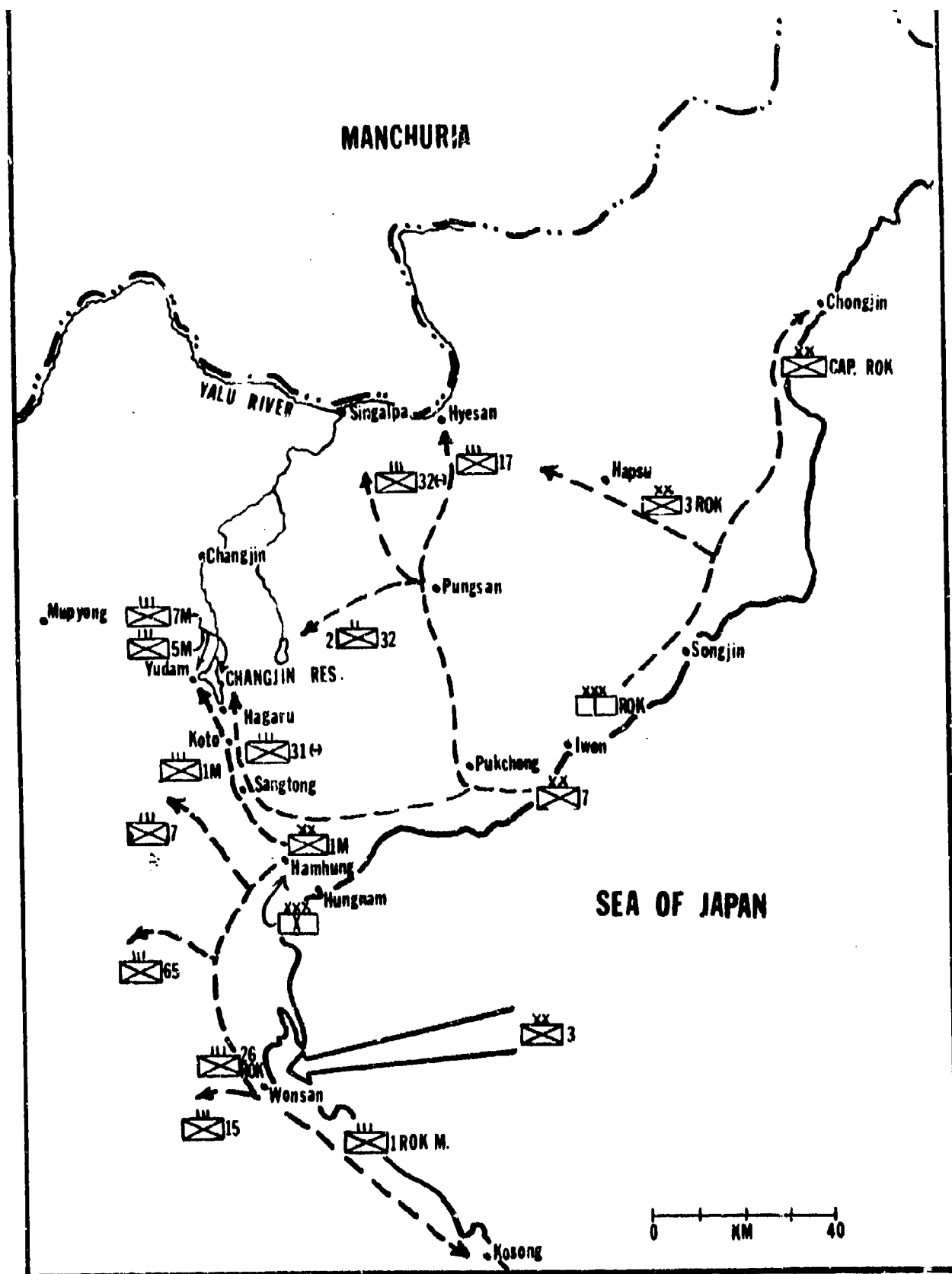
Task Force Faith attempted breakout to Hagaru.

2-6 Dec 50: Survivors of Task Force Faith arrived in Hagaru.

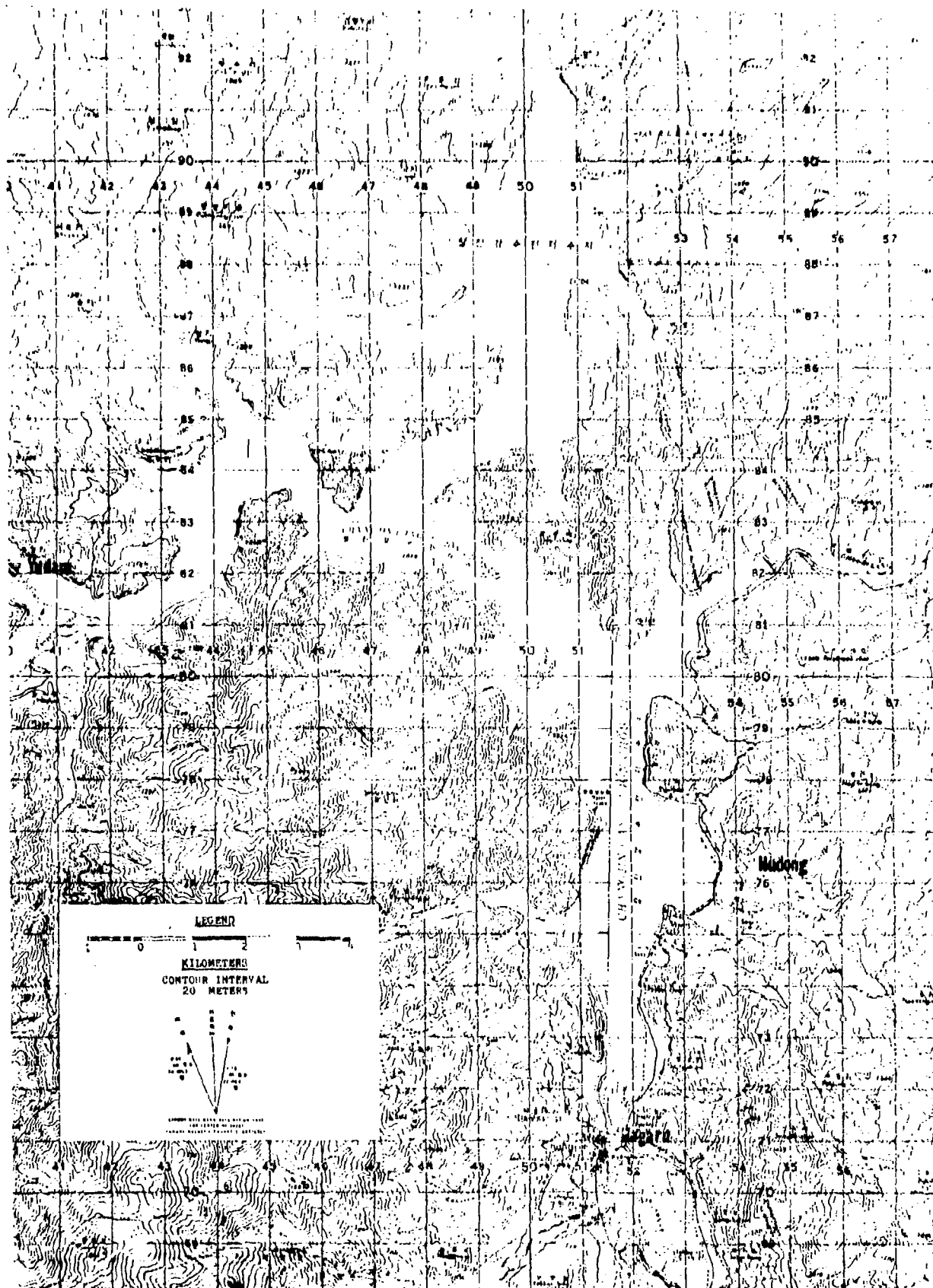
MAPS



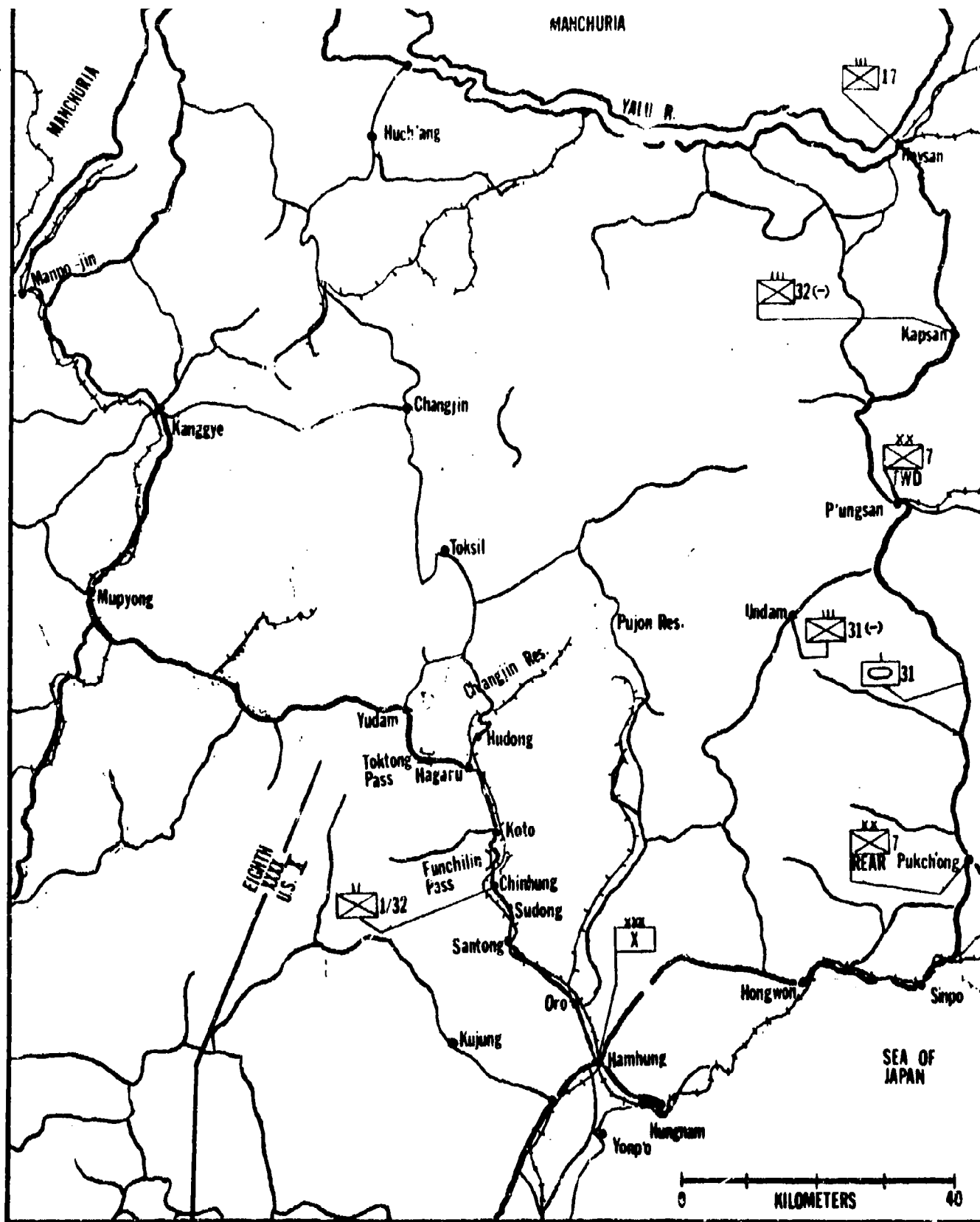
MAP A: KOREA IN AUG/SEP 1950



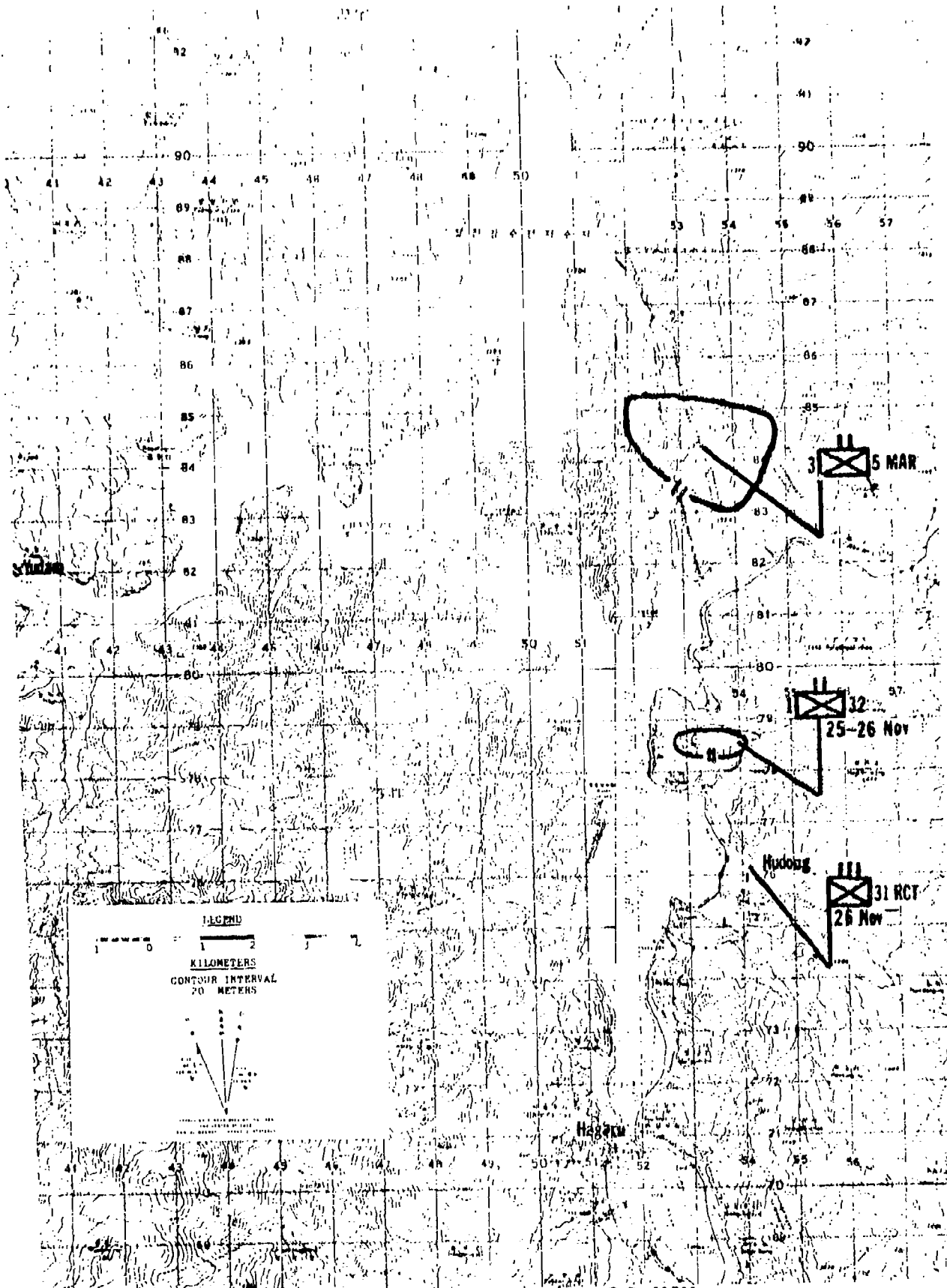
MAP B: X CORPS OPERATIONS, 25 NOV 1950



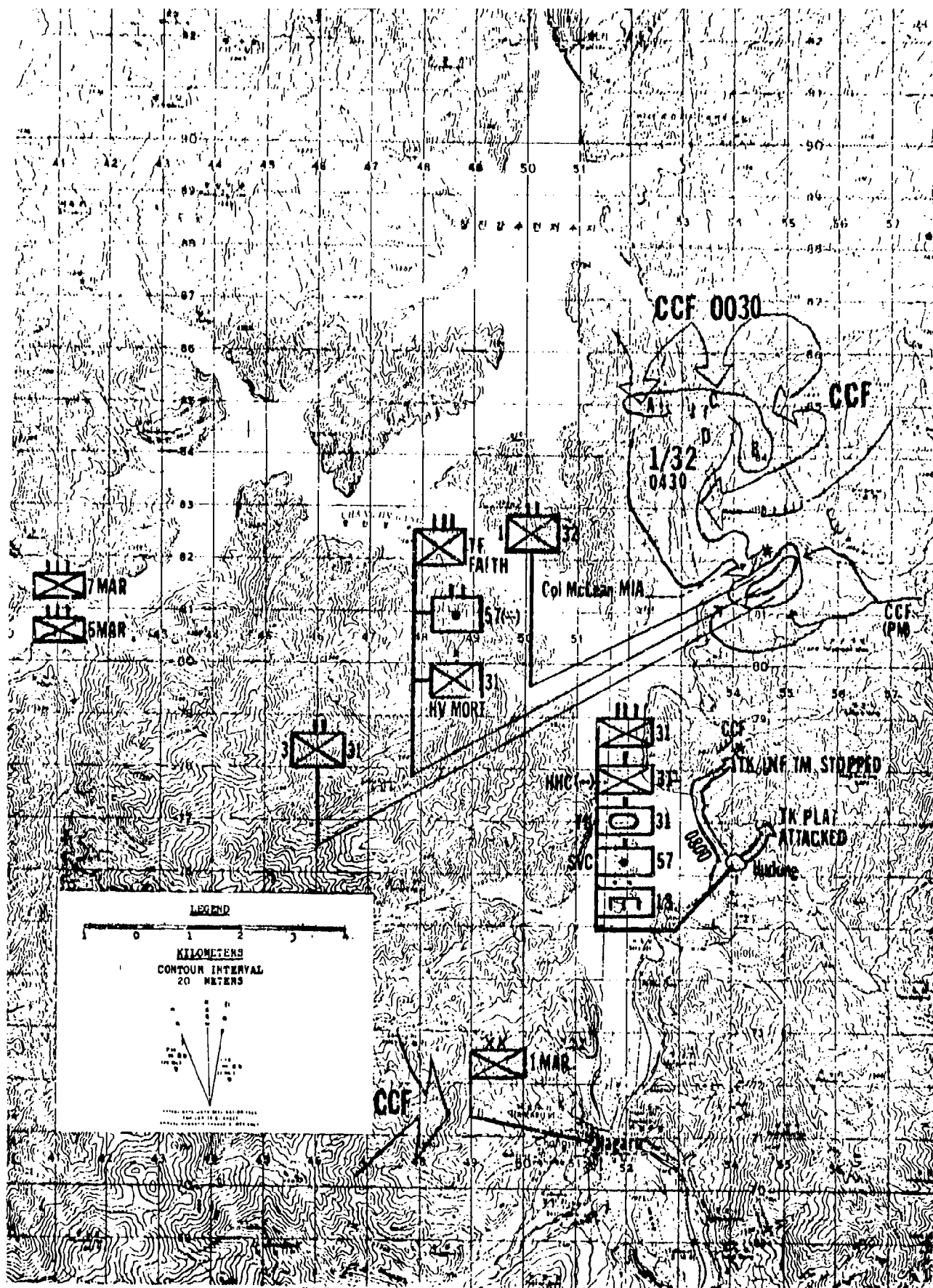
MAP C: CHANGJIN RESERVOIR



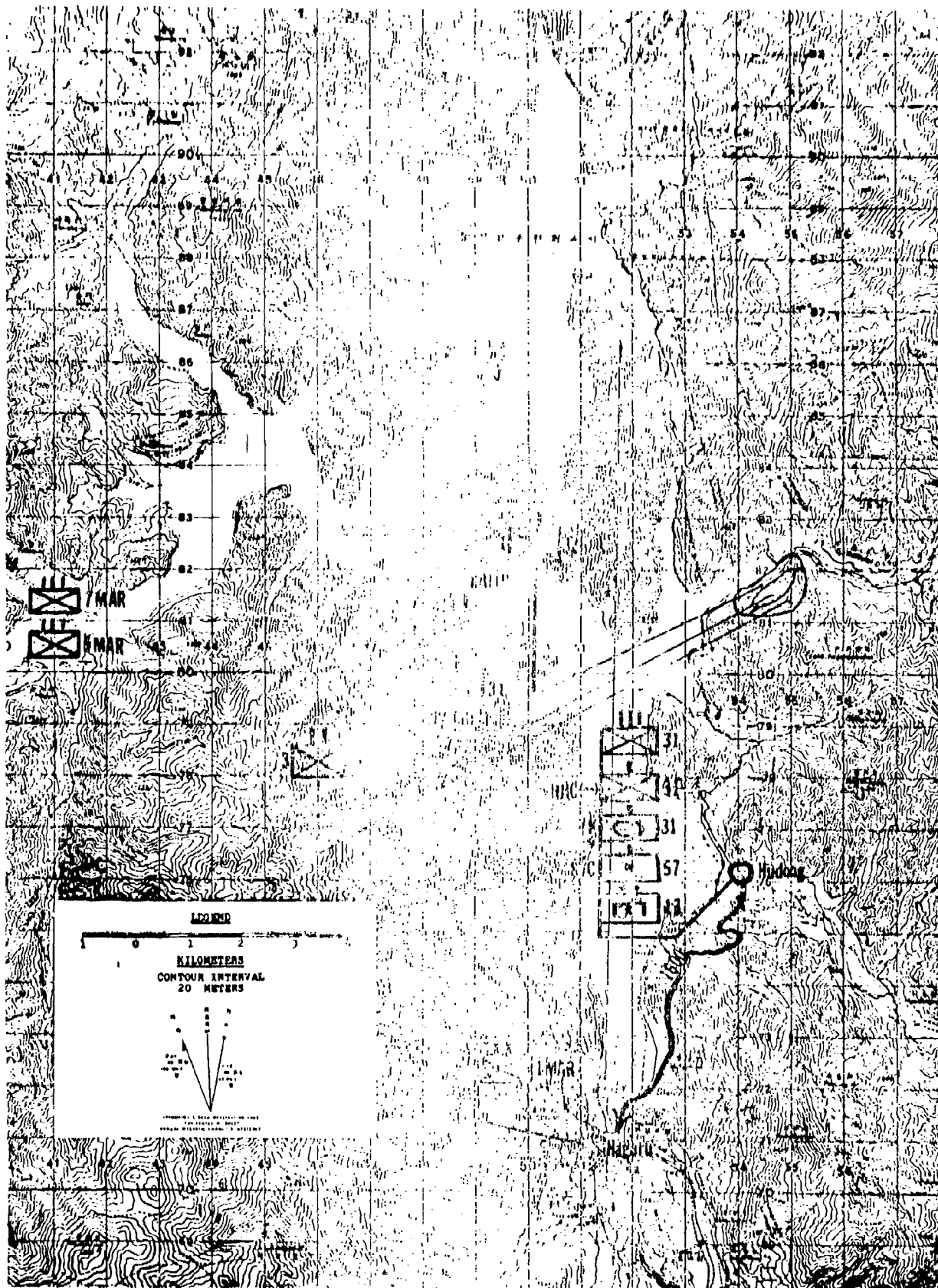
MAP D: AREA OF OPERATIONS, 25 NOV 1950



MAP E: OPERATIONS, 25-26 NOV



MAP H: OPERATIONS, 29 NOV



39 NOV

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